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**MIXED FORTUNES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AND QUALITY OF
LIFE**

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I declare that this thesis is all my own work throughout.

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ABSTRACT

Ideological and legislative change in the field of learning disability over the past two decades has been concerned with promoting social integration. The strategy of placing people with learning disabilities in jobs with local employers is claimed to provide opportunities for social integration, for socially valued roles and for improving 'quality of life'. 'Supported employment' has become a valued model for achieving employment opportunities in Scotland as elsewhere, but the direct experience and outcomes of supported employment have received scant research attention. This research study aims to make a contribution to expanding our research knowledge, particularly in regard to the subjective experience of users and the variations in project development in Scotland as compared to England and Wales. Using qualitative methods, the research explored how employment changed the lives of 18 individuals using three different supported employment projects, and whether it did so in ways one would expect. Data was collected through qualitative interviews, observations, documentary analysis, a standardised measure of vocational integration and questionnaire. The research design was phenomenological in its approach to studying supported employment outcomes.

Results indicate that a range of services appear under the rubric of supported employment and that such programmatic differences have an impact on the nature and extent of the support provided and on individual outcomes. The findings show young men living at home benefited most from these services; that none of the projects was targeting people with more challenging needs; that most jobs provided were part-time (under 16 hours generally), low status 'entry-level' positions, and for low pay; that individuals overall were satisfied with their jobs, but dissatisfied when jobs lacked clear roles, were low paid or were for only a few hours a week, and when social integration opportunities were lacking; and that all in all, individuals' preferences and desires were not reflected in the objective conditions of many supported employment jobs.

These findings challenge common assumptions about the cultural significance of work and its role in promoting the social integration and acceptance of people with learning disabilities. The potential of the supported employment model for enhancing quality of life is limited by the structure of jobs, workplace cultures, the parameters other people set in the lives of an individual with learning disabilities, and projects' emphases. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for the supported employment field.

CHAPTER 1:

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The thrust of ideological and legislative change in the field of learning disabilities over the past two decades has been concerned with promoting social inclusion. New training technologies and the 'supported employment' model emerging in the 1970s enabled people with severe learning disabilities to successfully enter the workforce in greater numbers. Although most of this development has taken place in England and Wales, there are a growing number of supported employment projects in Scotland, some of which have existed for over ten years. In 1992 a UK-wide survey of supported employment projects identified six Scottish projects (Lister et al, 1992). Despite the apparent success of the model however, there was little research of the Scottish experience to date, particularly from the user perspective. It was important to try and redress this research imbalance especially given perceived local variations between the kinds of projects developed in Scotland compared to England and Wales.

The research study was undertaken during a time of intense questioning of the role of day centres for people with learning disabilities. It was also at a critical paradigm shift in the field of learning disability from a 'service' or 'facility-based' model to a 'support model', emergent new approaches focusing on 'quality of life', person-centred approaches, the importance of choice and creating opportunities for self-determination, as well as significant changes in the organisation and financing of services generally. All of which questioned many fundamental and traditionally-held notions about day service provision. Meanwhile normalisation ideology has come under scrutiny, particularly its insistence on full social integration, and some would argue, has been replaced by the 'quality of life' movement.

Employment in ordinary workplaces is commonly portrayed as an important determinant of the development and identity of adulthood, facilitating valued social roles for people who have become devalued and rejected by society (Wolfensberger, 1992). This first chapter begins by looking briefly at the historical development of day centre provision; the influence of legislation and ideology on the development of specialist employment services; the significance of the social meaning of work and its relevance in the lives of people with learning disabilities; and finally, reflects on the 'quality of life' discourse.

DAY SERVICES POLICY & EMPLOYMENT

Since the 1960s the landscape of daytime provision for people with learning disabilities has been dominated by local authority Adult Training Centres (ATCs) or, as many in Scotland are now called, Adult Resource Centres (ARCs). The legal duty on local authorities for providing day services, arises both from the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, and more specifically, from the Mental Health (Scotland) Acts, 1960 and 1984. Part 3, Section 11 (1), subsection 2 of the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984, states that it should be the duty of the local authority to provide or secure "suitable training and occupation".

The notion of work and occupation as a desired outcome, is not a new phenomenon of the 1990s. Earlier this century, the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913, established 'occupational centres' whose explicit aim was to train, occupy and supervise those people covered by the Act, including people with learning disabilities. Following the Second World War, the number of occupational centres increased dramatically throughout the UK, mainly as a result of the Mental Health Act, 1959. This Act included a clear call for the development of community-based day care provided by local authorities, in preference to hospital-based care. Occupational centres provided a form of sheltered work, frequently involving manufacturing assembly tasks and craft work.

The initial orientation towards sheltered occupation was succeeded some years later by a greater emphasis on training in the work skills needed for paid employment. Beyer et al (1994) have argued that the roots of the modern ATC/ARC are clearly embedded in a 'work ethic' culture, as expressed through legislation, and the philosophy of occupational centres. Not everyone labelled as 'learning disabled' has attended a day centre. Some have lived and worked in therapeutic communities: for example since 1940 the Camphill community in Aberdeenshire, based on the ideas and philosophy of Steiner (Baron & Haldane, 1992). In some shape or form, and for most of this century, people with learning disabilities have been engaged in 'work' of some description, often without pay, or for only nominal wages, and more often than not their work has been carried out in places separate from other people.

Ordinary work has been a goal, albeit not the major one, of the ATC/ARC programme. The ATCs/ARCs of the 1960s-70s provided industrial contract work experience, as it was assumed that trainees would progress to real jobs with community employers. However, this proved to be a flawed assumption: several studies found that few people actually moved on from centres (Seed et al, 1984; IDC, 1984, 1982; Whelan & Speake, 1977). In fact, Seed (1988) found that less than 1% of day centre attenders moved from Scottish ATCs/ARCs into jobs, or on to anything else for that matter. It

was this general lack of throughput in the ATC/ARC system that has since galvanised national and localised reviews of the future of day services.

The policies and guidelines expressed by the National Development Group (1977) in Pamphlet 5, which in principle were accepted as government policy, envisaged a more outward looking philosophy for ATCs, with both staff and clients moving out into the community for training, work and leisure. It later became clear that this had not been fully embraced by existing ATCs, arguably because staff ratios deteriorated along with the economic situation, thus making much of the vision expressed in Pamphlet 5 a practical impossibility. What did transpire was a change in emphasis from work to social education with many centres in England and Wales changing their name to Social Education Centres (SECs), and 'trainees' becoming 'students' overnight, effectively placing a stronger emphasis on teaching of social and independent living skills to improve individuals' quality of life. The new role was given expression in the Education (Scotland) Act, 1974. The Government White Paper 1971- "Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped" - in broadening the role of ATCs, also highlighted their role in providing breaks for families, thus arguably paving the way for the wide range of models and considerable confusion of purpose found by researchers that still exists today (Seed, 1996: Seed et al, 1984).

For many years policy makers have been grappling with the notion that ATCs/ ARCs should provide employment opportunities, and thus ensure a regular throughput of clients. The problem was not perceived to be with the system itself, but with its capacity to achieve throughput, an assumption that is gradually being eroded by change programmes such as the 'Changing Days' project started in 1994 by the King's Fund and the National Development Team (McIntosh & Whittaker, 1998) and Changeover, a partnership between the NDT, the former Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department and Dundee University. The main social policy thrust has been to increase the number of ATC places available, clearly a somewhat restricted vision, and a direction which is now largely rejected. Since the 1980s renewed calls for greater emphasis to be placed on employment have sprung from this concern to free places in the ATC, principally to make way for people leaving long-stay hospitals to live in the community (Independent Development Council, 1984, 1982), rather than because the system had embraced the emerging philosophy of the 'support model'.

Progress in providing employment opportunities was reported at this time as 'patchy' (IDC, 1984). Moreover, Simons (1998), and Beyer & Kilsby (1997) have both observed that while supported employment has been seen primarily as a way of getting people out of the day centres, preventing them from ever going there in the first place has largely been ignored. In contrast, in the United States positive social policy measures aimed at increasing the number of agencies providing employment with local employers, resulted in a qualitatively different landscape of service provision. Although sheltered workshops still operate in many parts of the US, the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990,

and the Rehabilitation Amendments Act 1992, provided the necessary legislative framework for developing a more focused and coherent national policy thrust aimed at providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Scottish Office statistics reveal a rapid growth of ATCs over the past decade, although this growth is now slowing. Local authorities provided over 80% of day services in 1996 (Scottish Office, 1998). On 31 December 1982, the number of people with learning disabilities in Scotland on ATC registers stood at 5,121. By 1996, this had risen to 7,555 people, an increase of 48%. There was however, a small decrease of around 2% in the number on the register (a decrease of 155 people) between 1991 and 1996, possibly explicable through the closure of an ATC in one Scottish Region, or the downsizing of several centres in different Regions. Between 1982 and 1996 the number of centres with over four places increased by 50 or 54%. The number of places has risen steadily with 93 centres providing 5,751 places in 1982 whereas by 1996, 143 centres were providing 8,675 places: an increase of 51% over the period (Scottish Office, 1998).

This growth contrasts sharply with the small number of projects ostensibly providing supported employment services in Scotland (Beyer et al, 1996b; Lister et al, 1992). Definitions of the support model and the development of supported employment are explored more fully in chapter 3 and so will not be defined in detail in this chapter. Despite a recent trend to change the role of day centres and reduce the number of days of attendance, over 60% of people attending day centres in 1996, were doing so for four or five days a week. In terms of the proportion of local authority expenditure on services for people with learning disabilities, day centres still represent the most significant expenditure. The funding of supported employment remains on the periphery of social work, as local authorities struggle to cope with an ever-decreasing budget to meet a range of core objectives.

Unclear Policy Direction Leads to Role Conflict

With little policy guidance, ATCs or ARCs in Scotland have pursued a range of different and sometimes conflicting objectives (Seed, 1988; Seed et al, 1984). Two significant studies of day centre services undertaken in Scotland and Wales have been chosen to illustrate differential developments in two parts of Britain: Seed (1988) studied 15 day centres in Scotland; Beyer et al (1994) surveyed ATCs in Wales. Both found a variety of different models in existence. Past research had similarly found a variety of different and sometimes conflicting models (SSI, 1989; Whelan & Speake, 1977). Seed's overall conclusion was that day services were segregated services with an extremely wide remit and commitment to personal support and social integration which they found difficult to sustain. The provision of services within day centres was failing to meet individual needs. The main recommendation of the Scottish research was for centres to develop as resource centres for

work, further education and community integration, a direction reminiscent of the 1984 proposals of the Independent Development Council.

Although similarities can be found in the findings of Seed and Beyer et al, they differed in terms of the promotion of work experience and paid work:

"The shift to placing people in ordinary work settings...has broadened the base of supervision from just ATC staff to include...employers and co-workers at the work site. Irrespective of any gains in terms of integration, increased involvement in activities that are already happening outside the ATC has enabled a more individualised service to be provided for some people."
(Beyer et al, 1994, page 37)

Seed et al on the other hand, had uncovered a parallel development or move away from work-based training in the Scottish day centres. The teaching of employment skills in the opinion of day centre officers was *"less relevant as unemployment figures rose"* (Seed et al, 1984, p16). However, such an assertion was contrary to the emergent writing on supported employment: Wertheimer (1987) observed that what was frequently ignored was that many day centres did not try to find jobs when unemployment rates were much lower. This assertion also seems to contradict the finding from the survey of supported employment that local authority day centres appeared to be a *"seedbed for a lot of employment activity, representing the dominant mode of operation for supported employment"* (Lister et al, 1992, p7) in other areas of Britain, and Pozner & Hammond's (1993) finding that despite high rates of unemployment in many areas, supported employment agencies had secured jobs.

Emergence of a 'Supported Employment' Model

The Independent Development Council (1984) had observed that in many areas of the country, families, voluntary organisations and ATC staff themselves were expressing dissatisfaction with the poor employment outcomes of day services. In some areas positive action had been taken to provide alternatives, or to change the direction of existing services. Significant criticism of day centres issued from organisations such as the British Association of Social Workers, the King's Fund Centre (1984) and the Independent Development Council (1984), as places which concentrated and segregated people with disabilities and did little to realise common aspirations for paid jobs. The IDC (1984) argued that services must change radically to ensure participation in community life. It was asserted that not only were centres doing little to enhance the value of people with learning disabilities, they *"perpetuate their separation as a stigmatised group."* (The King's Fund, 1984, p24). Critics such as Wertheimer (1987) were arguing that day services had become a substitute rather than a training ground for employment.

During the 1980s, the revolution in employment services taking place in the USA, principally through advances in training technologies, became evident through research evaluations of demonstration projects reporting successful outcomes. Consequently, the supported employment model migrated to this country, and was to radically influence thinking about the pursuit of employment. To conclude, although the dramatic increase in ATC/ARC places was initially considered progress, doubts were expressed over their universal suitability to meet individual needs, mainly through critical understanding of the principle of normalisation, and growing awareness of the success of the supported employment model in the USA.

A now vast body of literature successfully challenges the assumption that people with learning disabilities have little or no potential for competitive work, and abounds with many examples of how having a job has improved the quality of life of individuals with severe learning disabilities (e.g. Wertheimer, 1992a; West et al, 1992b; O'Bryan, 1991; Inge et al, 1988; McLoughlin et al, 1987; Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985; King's Fund, 1984). The main issue is suggested to be more one of a lack of opportunity, low expectations and poor support. A study of 65 young people with learning disabilities leaving special schools paints a common, but grim picture (May & Hughes, 1985). Of the sample, 5% found work almost immediately, a year later a further 10% had spent some time in employment, but 3 years after leaving school only 5% were still in open employment. Elsewhere it has been suggested that the unemployment rate for people with learning disabilities is in the region of 90% compared to around 10-12% for the general population (Bush, 1998).

In the same way that community care philosophy and legislation means it is no longer considered best practice to deliver residential services in large segregated institutions, it is increasingly accepted in respect of daytime occupation, that individuals should be able to access ordinary community resources, including employment, alongside other members of the community. This requires radical change from conventional 'job readiness' rehabilitation approaches emphasising transferable skills developed in work training settings, to a support-orientated approach. The Social Services Inspectorate (1998) in a report of a national inspection of services for people with learning disabilities, recognised that new approaches called for smaller, more local bases, intended to serve as resource bases closer to mainstream facilities. Given the mounting pressures on overstretched day centres from deinstitutionalisation policy, there is a choice either to expand traditional services, or to create new systems more in tune with emergent thinking on community integration and participation through employment. Clearly, major influences on the community care policy direction include ideology, in particular the influential theory of normalisation, and rising expectations. It is to the critical debate around normalisation and social inclusion that I now turn.

IDEOLOGY OF NORMALISATION

The principle of normalisation has been a major influence on the development of human services in western countries, becoming an internationally influential paradigm and playing a central role in the shaping of community care policy (Emerson, 1992; Flynn, 1980). The subject of this thesis, the development of employment opportunities, is no exception: chiefly because employment is still one of the most significant areas of 'normal' life that has been largely denied people with learning disabilities. Although the origins of normalisation rest with the Scandinavian writers Nirje (1969) and Bank-Mikkelsen (1980), normalisation did not become widely known until the publication of Wolfensberger's classic text in 1972, translating the concept for a North American audience. Significant differences between these renditions of the concept are worth exploring further, as they contain important implications for the way employment services have developed in both the US and the UK.

The origins of normalisation in the Scandinavian mental retardation services of the late 1950s lay in criticisms of institutional life, provoking the development of new approaches. It was firmly rooted in the belief that all people were entitled to the same legal and human rights, opportunities and experiences: people with learning disabilities should enjoy the same lifestyles and economic conditions as others in society. It was largely concerned with the design and operation of residential services, but its relevance in other areas of life were recognised and stated. There was an implication therefore, that work, fair wages and ensuring the same rhythms of life were important, but the emphasis was not placed on working alongside non-disabled people. Normalisation ideology had a profound effect on the services and associated legislation in both Denmark and Sweden, and ultimately provided the foundations for the 1971 United Nations Declaration of General and Specific Rights of the Mentally Retarded (Emerson, 1992).

In contrast, Wolfensberger's reformulation of normalisation emphasised the significance of social integration, and culturally-specific processes and outcomes on the basis that cultures vary in their norms. This aspect has since attracted severe criticism as an attempt to encourage people to conform to the behaviours and attitudes of the dominant culture of the time (Brown & Smith, 1992; Szivos, 1992; Shaddock & Zilber, 1991; Brown & Smith, 1989; Brechin & Swain, 1988). Normalisation was defined by Wolfensberger as: *"Utilization of means which are as culturally normative as possible, in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviors and characteristics which are as culturally normative as possible"* (Wolfensberger, 1972, p28).

In western society, Wolfensberger identified personal competency or skill as a highly valued commodity. Many authors have argued that through employment, individuals with disabilities can acquire skills and knowledge that will enhance their acceptance by others (McLoughlin et al 1987;

Gold, 1980; Wolfensberger 1972). Wolfensberger contrasted the positive social roles of employee, worker or self-employed conveying usefulness and responsibility with the negative roles of dependency and incapacity commonly ascribed to people with learning disabilities as service recipients (Wolfensberger 1992, 1983, 1981, 1972,). The assumption that people with learning disabilities are incapable of being employed has been shown to be the product of low expectations. However, ardent critics of using paid employment as a key measure of identity and self respect, do so on the grounds that it has less to do with quality of life and more to do with making people fit with societal norms (Holm et al, 1994). Later on in this chapter I will return to this theme when discussing the concept of quality of life.

Wolfensberger (1972) identified seven core themes of normalisation - the unconscious element in services, role expectations, deviancy magnification, personal competence, imitation, the dynamics of imagery, and social integration. Although I have touched on some of these in the passing, I now intend to focus more specifically on just one of these themes, that of social integration, as being of particular relevance to the discussion of the significance of employment.

Core Theme: Social Integration

Concern about the deleterious effects inherent in what Goffman (1961) termed 'total institutions' grew in the 1960s and was confirmed by a series of exposés of the dreadful living conditions in some of the large mental handicap hospitals (DHSS, 1979; Wolfensberger 1975; Goffman, 1961). Criticisms of the poor quality of life within these institutions, together with new insights through normalisation ideology, refocused policy attention towards efforts to maximise social inclusion and community care options. The motivation to pursue employment in ordinary integrated workplaces can be seen within the context of normalisation values and belief that enhancement of the quality of life of people with disabilities depends on opportunities to mix and form friendships with non-disabled people at work (McLoughlin et al, 1987; King's Fund Centre, 1984). Social integration is therefore one of the key principles of supported employment.

O'Brien (1990, 1987) presented five essential accomplishments as an operational definition of normalisation: choice; community presence; community participation; respect; and competence. These related terms defined the success of services by focusing on the quality of outcomes. Two in particular are important in respect of the current discussion: community presence and community participation. Community presence accentuates mobilising resources to assist people with disabilities to share the ordinary places and activities of community life including employment, while community participation emphasises the need for programmes to assist individuals to form and maintain the variety of ties and connections that constitute community life and increase individuals' access to social

opportunities through paid work (Brandon & Brandon, 1988; Flynn & Nitsch, 1980). In other words, integration has two major components - physical and social (Wolfensberger, 1972).

Criticisms of the Principle of Social Integration

In the light of experience, contemporary authors have argued that certain aspects of normalisation have been over-rated, particularly its insistence on full social integration (Szivos, 1992; Shaddock & Zilber, 1991). Szivos (1992) utilised the psycho-social theories of 'social comparison' and 'affiliation' and the achievements of the women's movement to reason that people with learning disabilities had much to gain from association with other people with learning disabilities in terms of mutual support and solidarity. This is an argument that echoes with a more recent discussion of the Danish concept of 'quality of life' as promoting the involvement of people with disabilities in designing what they consider to be the 'good life' or quality of life in whatever setting and with whomsoever they choose, which may or may not include having a job (Holm et al, 1994).

The academic discourse on normalisation, as well as empirical evidence, suggests that social integration is difficult to achieve and even more difficult to measure. Szivos (1993) studied attitudes to work and their relationship to self-esteem in a group of young people with learning disabilities, working in both sheltered and integrated settings. Those working in integrated work settings were found to have lower self-esteem, as a consequence of unfavourable social comparisons with their non-disabled peers. Thus challenging the commonly held wisdom about the benefits of integrated employment, and pointing to a need to adopt a broad quality of life approach when evaluating supported employment outcomes. Other researchers have found that physical integration or community presence can lead to social isolation and loneliness (Knox & Parmenter, 1993; Todd et al 1990; Jahoda et al, 1990; Richardson & Ritchie, 1989; Cattermole et al, 1988; Flynn, 1989).

Ironically, normalisation has arguably allowed professionals and others, for example carers, to hold on to the role of expert, or one who knows what is best (Holm et al, 1994). It is precisely in discourses about what is meant by a 'normal' life, that Holm and other Danish authors conclude that 'the tyranny of the normal', should be replaced by a new dialogue with people with learning disabilities and families about what they consider to be a 'good life', what determines the quality of life and what conditions are necessary to enable them to shape their own lives. (Quality of life as it relates to this study is discussed later in the chapter).

Normalisation has made a positive contribution to sensitising policy makers and practitioners to the importance of ensuring that the patterns and rhythms of life for people with disabilities are the same as others. Employment is underlined as an important feature of identity in adulthood. Counter to that has been the argument that work itself is a culturally-defined phenomenon, and furthermore that it is

essentially a patriarchal one, based on an assumption of full time work outside the home (Grint, 1991). As such the goal of employment, along with normalisation, has been accused of maintaining the dominant capitalist work ethic in society. In advocating the benefits of employment it is suggested that other ways that people can and do make a contribution to society and/or choose to find meaning in their lives, have been devalued. The next section explores these ideas further through a brief examination of the cultural meaning of work.

THE CULTURAL MEANING OF WORK

The basic need to work is strongly rooted in natural motivations for survival and desires for pleasure, security and comfort (Baumeister, 1991). However, work has become imbued with deep cultural meanings, of which only a brief account is possible in this thesis. Several authors, including Grint (1991) have discussed the cultural meanings of work more eloquently and fully than can be achieved here. In summary, paid work in western society not only represents an important source of income to satisfy basic needs, but also provides benefits such as status, occupation, purpose, and the focus of social relationships, the loss of which can result in poor mental and physical health (Smith, 1985-6).

The cultural meanings of work were emphasised by exponents of the significance of employment for people with learning disabilities from the 1980s on. Grint's (1991) analysis of the problem of work for women as being one of opportunity and time, can be applied to the majority of people with learning disabilities: it is widely accepted in theory that people with learning disabilities have been excluded from employment and have thus been denied even the chance to prove they can succeed (Wolfensberger, 1972). Supported employment initiatives are attempting to redress this imbalance by providing the much-needed opportunity to work.

One could argue, as have Baumeister (1991) and others, that the link between success at work and the inner worth of the self remains as strong today. Indeed this belief is clearly evident in the development of supported employment services for people with disabilities. Beyer & Kilsby (1992) drew attention to the strength of the 'work ethic' in American society and culture underpinning the legislative and funding basis for a more extensive supported employment provision. Modern society has created positive conceptual links between work and self-worth, now challenged by contributors to the debate on the future of work and the concept of quality of life (Meadows, 1996; Mayo, 1996; Holm et al, 1994):

"The traditional 'work ethic' has underpinned the rise of employment over the last 200 years. At the same time, in establishing employment with society's imprimatur as the principal sources of personal identity and means of social participation, it has helped to reinforce social exclusion and the lack of self worth associated with unemployment."
(Mayo, 1996, page 159)

Ideas about work are in a state of flux but for many people work is still an important determinant of the quality of their lives. In the same way as there are gender biases in the social construction of work, so do people with learning disabilities experience discriminatory treatment accessing work opportunities. Earlier attempts to provide work opportunities have emphasised separateness from others, rather than promoted the right of people with learning disabilities to work alongside non-disabled people. From the 1980s onwards, proponents of an ordinary working life promoted work as offering a number of positive benefits. Such benefits were firmly grounded in the theory of normalisation and the cultural meanings of work that have been briefly outlined above.

These benefits included access to socially valued roles; a purpose or structure to life; social links with the community; meaningful choices and opportunities; and a sense of personal future (Welsh 1991; Porterfield, 1988; McLoughlin et al, 1987; Shearer, 1986; Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985; Kings Fund, 1984). Some writers claimed that work had a positive effect on undesirable or challenging behaviours (Welsh 1991; McLoughlin et al, 1987; Morrissey, 1987; Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985; Kings Fund 1984); and improved quality of life (Orbell, 1992; Welsh, 1991; McLoughlin, 1987; Shearer, 1986; Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985). In many respects, the debate about the future of work in society and the importance of work for people with disabilities exist as parallel discourses.

WORK AND 'QUALITY OF LIFE'

The concept of 'quality of life' frequently appears alongside discussions about work for a variety of reasons, depending on what meanings are attached to work. Kiuranor (1980) argued that work itself can be used as a single indicator of quality of life. Others have discussed the relationship between what people do at work and their overall enjoyment of life (Hedley et al, 1980). Employment in ordinary workplaces is assumed to result in a better 'quality of life' for individuals with learning disabilities (McLoughlin et al, 1987; Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985; King's Fund, 1984). But what is meant by the term 'quality of life' and is it a useful concept for research?

At the beginning of the 1990s it was predicted that 'quality of life' would supersede normalisation to become the issue in human services (Goode & Hogg, 1994; Schalock, 1994, 1990, 1989). Popularisation of the concept and a lack of consensus over definition of the term, was possibly underestimated however. 'Quality of life' is now a universally accepted and used concept, but its meaning remains contentious and open to debate (Goode, 1994). Although a relatively modern phenomenon (Szalai, 1980), the search for meaning in life and the essential nature of human existence is hardly new (Baumeister, 1991; Megone, 1990; Robertson, 1982). Contemporary debate is often dominated by considerations of identification and measurement of its parts, rather than debate about the

philosophical implications. On the other hand, as Pirsig (1974) postulated, the nature of quality itself poses philosophical problems for anyone trying to measure it:

"Quality you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is...But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what the Quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof!"
(Pirsig, 1974, p178)

Despite problems of definition, the concept of quality of life is generally perceived as an essential framework in determining the effectiveness and appropriateness of social policy and social work practice. For instance, Sinfield (1982) stated that in a context of public expenditure cuts, seeking the subjective judgement of quality of life in relation to different interventions was an imperative rather than an option. Economic analysis of health and welfare have brought to the fore the need to measure quality in relation to health outputs and outcomes (Baldwin et al, 1990). Developments in self-advocacy have further fueled the need to discover better ways of involving users in determining the quality of service outcomes (Schalock, 1994). Subsequently a growing number of research studies have utilised this concept. Yet Goode (1994), as editor of a volume presenting international perspectives on quality of life, suggested it is still too early in the concept's development to speak about definitive versions. It is therefore important to clarify the specific meanings one is attaching to it, and for researchers to make explicit the domains of interest and focus on these (Petch, 1992; Bowling, 1991).

Most quality of life research is individualistic in focus, although it can also be used to describe the conditions of a group of people and the ways in which the quality of life conditions of one person impact on another (Seed & Lloyd, 1997; Matikka, 1994). A cursory scan across a range of literature reveals different usages of the terms:

"Quality of life is simultaneously about the needs and hopes of individual people and about groups of people. It is also about an individual's personal environment, the setting of their daily living and it is about our shared global environment."
(Seed & Lloyd, 1997, p4)

Such eclecticism sets the notion of quality of life up for challenge: Wolfensberger (1994) for example, asserted that it "drips with surplus meaning", causing more confusion than illumination and leading to the conclusion that a concept used in such different ways by researchers, politicians, and policy analysts, to mean whatever one chooses, was a 'hopeless term', one lacking scientific credibility. Even acknowledging such paradoxes and contradictions however, there were important reasons for utilising 'quality of life' as a concept in this research based on user perspectives which are outlined further below and in chapter 4.

The Subjective Experience of Quality of Life

Felce & Perry (1993) in contributing to the definition and measurement of quality of life in the UK, and Goode (1989b, 1990) drawing conclusions from the American Quality of Life Project, argued that the conceptualisation of quality of life sets a broad agenda where the relative importance of issues must be decided by people with disabilities and their families. Most seem to agree that it is essentially a subjective phenomenon (Goode, 1994; Robertson, 1982). Others including Baldwin et al (1990) have suggested that the main issues in quality of life research were how it should be conceptualised and measured.

The quality of life concept at various times has been dubbed a 'sensitising concept' (Taylor, 1994); and a 'guiding principle' (Schalock, 1994) to assessing the quality of service outcomes. Adopting a quality of life perspective implies greater accountability to the people who use services (Goode, 1988a,b,c). The lack of clarity of definition, and the plurality of meanings attached to it is precisely why it is important, as well as interesting, to explore the meanings people with learning disabilities attach to the experience of particular interventions in their lives, both collectively and individually. Empirical studies including the ethnographic studies of Edgerton (1993, 1991, 1990, 1967), had previously warned of the dangers of being swayed by objective measures to meaningfully define a 'decent', 'reasonable' or 'good' life, citing evidence of the independence of objective life events from subjective reports of well-being.

At the beginning of the research few supported employment researchers had chosen to focus on quality of life issues and even fewer had used qualitative research approaches. What quality of life research existed relied on standard measures. In the main the findings were positive: supported employment outcomes were superior to those of sheltered workshops in terms of a range of restricted variables, and individual placements fared better than enclaves and workgroups. (Knox & Parmenter, 1993; Sinnott-Oswald et al, 1991; Storey & Horner, 1991; Schalock et al, 1989; Chadsey-Rusch & Gonzalez, 1988). By the time this study was complete, a new body of knowledge had grown up around quality of life, including new research paradigms in disability (e.g. Bach, 1994, Rosenberg & Capitol People First, 1994). The concluding chapter of the thesis makes reference to new perspectives and their implications for the study's findings.

A Quality of Life Framework

Researchers have examined quality of life from a range of frameworks and a number of conceptual models exist. Although no single model or definition of quality of life was used, an attempt was made to explore certain quality of life domains as identified in the supported employment and quality of life literature, and from previous studies of the views of people with learning disabilities: the issue of

choice and self determination, community presence and community participation , subjective feelings about life and employment in particular, sense of self-worth and self-esteem, and the material conditions of jobs, including pay and working environment were examined. Every individual has a different idea of what true quality is; therefore adopting a qualitative approach as outlined in chapter 4 also ensured openness to other factors that might be identified by the interviewees.

Choice & Self Determination

At the heart of the concept of quality of life is the modern notion of opportunity. This has been defined as freedom from oppressive restraint, real possibilities and knowledge of these possibilities, having the confidence to act, having access and support from others (Seed & Lloyd, 1997, p34). Having the right and opportunity to make choices is implied as a vital ingredient in most conceptualisations of quality of life. All life choices and decisions have been argued to contribute at varying levels to some aspect of quality of life (Wehmeyer, 1996). Cattermole et al (1990) found that availability of choice was one of the most important factors influencing individuals' perception of quality of life. Wehmeyer (1996) argued further that there is an "*inherently evident link*" between increased opportunities to make choices and decisions to take more control over one's life, and enhanced quality of life.

As Taylor (1994) observed, quality of life is usually examined because it is suspected that something is lacking. Similarly with choice, we know that people with learning disabilities often lack the opportunity to experience control and choice in their lives, and their lives would be more fulfilling and satisfying if this were not the case. As Simons (1998) discovered, where people with learning disabilities live, (that is, with parents, on their own, in a supported housing situation, in residential care and so on), determines whether they will have the 'choice' to take up work in the first place. The way the welfare benefits system currently interacts with housing, limits rather than promotes choice, promotes dependency rather than independence and leaves people economically insecure. The potential to take up part-time or full-time employment is also affected (Beyer et al, 1996b). Stalker & Harris (1998) argued that making choices was inhibited by a range of factors, the most important of which appeared to be related to the nature of the services offered and the beliefs and attitudes of staff. There is a lack of information about people with learning disabilities' own views of the amount of choice and the desirability of available options and their satisfaction with these.

Theoretical assertions about supported employment include that it increases individual choice and control over decision-making. Choice is an element of quality of life that can be assessed by directly asking the people concerned about their experiences. In respect of supported employment there is an interest in the degree of choice of job, and the role of support staff and whether they had an input in devising support strategies. Taking a broader quality of life perspective, how does a service like

supported employment further individual autonomy and the self-determination of individuals with learning disabilities?

Social Integration & Friendships

The American Quality of Life Project concluded that individuals would have a better quality of life if they had friends at work (Goode, 1988b,c). Employment has been argued to offer an opportunity for interaction and relationships with other people, particularly non-disabled people. Seed & Lloyd (1997) concluded that beyond basic necessities, people generally value non-material things including friendship and family as important determinants of their quality of life. Relationships with other people have been found to be a key aspect of quality of life for people with learning disabilities (Atkinson & Ward, 1987). Relationships with other people have been identified as a critical factor in peoples' level of life satisfaction (Jahoda et al, 1990; Ritchardson & Ritchie, 1989).

Positive changes in individuals' social lives as an outcome of supported employment are often claimed. However, increasingly researchers have questioned the assumption that mere placement in ordinary integrated workplaces will itself result in social participation. Knox & Parmenter (1993) described supported employees more often as "*'in' the work setting but not 'of' it*". Success in the labour market does not necessarily equate to successful social integration. Significant factors have been found to be workplace culture (Hagner, 1992a), and in relation to the individual, family background and social class (Banfalvy, 1996). This discovery has led researchers and policy makers to shift their attention from micro-level factors such as the behaviours of individuals that affect job success and the implications for training, to macro-level issues such as the social context of workplaces and latterly, 'natural supports' or the involvement of co-workers in training and supporting individuals with disabilities in jobs (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Test & Wood, 1996; Butterworth et al, 1996; Daeschlein, 1993; Nisbet, 1992; Sandow & Olson, 1991).

Material Conditions of Jobs

Whether low paid or unpaid work in integrated setting is an acceptable outcome of supported employment remains a controversial issue. Many employment specialists will argue that social integration is the primary goal, and wages secondary. It is important however, to recognise the dangers of concealing exploitation in low paid occupations under the guise of quality of life considerations. Bellamy (1984) for instance, argued that paid jobs were an essential component of supported employment, and should be pursued even if it meant refusing to take unpaid positions. He also advocated accepting paid jobs where the social integration opportunities were less than ideal. There is unfortunately no consensus on the wages issue.

Other indicators of quality jobs are the benefits that a company offers to its employees, including flexible working hours, opportunities for sick and holiday leave, pensions and in some cases health insurance. Again as with wages, consumers and employment specialists have to assess the pros and cons of the available benefits against other considerations of the job. Working conditions are such another consideration and judgments must be made about safety, comfort, accessibility and friendliness of the work setting, as some settings are more likely than others to foster the kinds of relationships and feelings of belonging that can make supported employment successful. Ultimately reference must be made to the level of job satisfaction of individuals in supported employment, and what they regard as the benefits.

SUMMARY

The right of all people to work is universally accepted in theory, encapsulated in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Article 23. That right is frequently denied people with learning disabilities. Although promotion of the 'work ethic' historically has meant that people with disabilities have engaged in segregated work opportunities in occupational centres, sheltered workshops and ATCs/ARCs, a central issue has been their lack of opportunity to participate in the general workforce. Despite growing recognition of the value and cultural significance of work, the provision of specially targeted employment services remains on the periphery of social work practice and budget priorities compared with day service provision. Provision in day centres in Scotland has continued to grow and far outstrips available opportunities for paid employment.

Work however, has always been on the agenda for people with disabilities. What has changed are the ideologies and motivation for finding integrated work in ordinary workplaces. The notion that people with learning disabilities are best served by group provision in segregated facilities is no longer the received wisdom. The principle of normalisation and the 'ordinary life' movement (Porterfield, 1988; Wolfensberger, 1972; Nirje 1969), the quality of life movement (Schalock, 1994; Goode, 1994), and the powerful discourse of self advocacy groups have all served to emphasise community participation or social integration as the key theme for human services in the 1990s. Several authors have argued that the goals of day services should be refocused towards social integration through employment (Wertheimer, 1996).

The literature on supported employment is steeped in the ideology of normalisation and assumptions about the cultural significance of work and its role in offering opportunities for fuller social integration and acceptance. Such assumptions must be considered within the broader debate on the future of work and the criticisms of normalisation (Meadows, 1996; Szivos, 1992; Brown & Smith, 1992). Further,

the current emphasis on employment can be perceived as not so much a call for a fundamental reorganisation of the current day service system and its values, as a reflection on the lack of throughput from ARCs, particularly in the context of hospital resettlement. Consequently, specialist employment services have in effect been placed at one end of a service continuum that continues to be based upon outmoded beliefs about the 'readiness' (or otherwise) of people with learning disabilities to work.

No longer is the language of integration the exclusive currency of academics and human service professionals however: inclusion is a major policy focus for national and local government. This heralds renewed political interest in the effects of social exclusion on individuals and communities, redirecting efforts towards ways of increasing social inclusion. The Rowntree Foundation's enquiry into income and wealth (Barclay 1995; Hills 1995) found a clear relationship between not having a job and poverty. This confirms the experiences of the majority of people with disabilities. An important contribution to changing income distribution between households lies in changing patterns of employment and unemployment. The notion of 'citizenship' has been extended through national employment policies to emphasise the importance for people traditionally excluded from the workforce to enter jobs. Although to be welcomed in principle, it will require to be monitored whether employment policies such as the New Deal for Disabled People will result in people with learning disabilities entering the workforce in significant numbers. Simons (1998) implied that this will have little impact unless the whole welfare-to-work policy is designed to be more inclusive, and issues in the wider social security benefits system also addressed.

Wolfensberger (1972) ascribes employment a central role in improving the quality of life of people with disabilities, whereas others (e.g. Holm et al, 1994) have begun to question the use of employment as a measure of identity and self-respect and as a major determinant of quality of life. It may be a valued role to be in work but is it actually a 'valuable' one to the individual? Quality of life considerations for the individual are of paramount importance. Some of the perceived benefits are based upon idealistic notions of work, and have nothing in common with the reality of working life for a great many people. Human services should not be too sanguine about the successes of getting people into jobs without examining the nature of the jobs obtained (Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985).

Baumeister (1991, p143) urged caution with respect to the expectations of work generally:

"The problem with work today, as with most secular promises of fulfillment, is that it cannot fully deliver all of what is expected of it."

In view of such criticisms, it seems pertinent that research focus on the outcomes of employment policies and practices. The debate around normalisation and social integration highlights the importance of paying attention to the conditions that offer people a valued life on their terms, and not accepting without question that employment is the answer to improving everyone's quality of life.

Research should therefore focus on how employment changes peoples' lives, and whether it does so in ways one would expect. There is a need to study supports in terms not only of whether they enable people to be in the community but also of whether their participation in that community is also promoted.

The changing nature of work in western society presents many challenges. Many of the traditional assumptions about work are shifting with increased globalisation of the world economy. Stevens & Martin (1999) point to a tangible shift in economic policy which has implications for the jobs market, most notably the downsizing or reducing of the workforce, while at the same time the government announces new measures to assist people with disabilities to find work as part of the 'Welfare to Work' programme. With employers likely to be employing fewer people, potential employees will be required to be highly educated, flexible and trained, which will conceivably impact on other parts of the job pool, especially on the number of unskilled jobs available (Beyer & Kilsby, 1996a)

The whole ethos of work itself, as well as patterns of working life, is changing radically. Handy (1994; 1984) advocated a future scenario where society accepted 'the job' and its earnings as only one part of a notion of work, consequently placing greater value on the ideals of equality and interdependence and better recognising the many forms of unpaid work, such as childcare and housework. Some writers on quality of life quoted above would seem to concur with these ideas. However, for the present such ideals appear radical, requiring major social policy change to implement. How such rethinking of the value of work in society would affect the drive towards employment for people with learning disabilities has yet to be explored. While intellectuals debate the passing of the Protestant work ethic and the new leisure society, the right to work remains a dominant issue for many people with disabilities (Olshansky, 1972).

CHAPTER 2:

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

There are many obstacles to gaining paid employment: some encountered specifically by people with disabilities, while others apply generally. In view of the conclusions from chapter 1, two major barriers to overcome would seem first to be the negative attitudes or prejudice of others, which perceive people with disabilities as in need of care, rather than as 'workers' or 'employees': and second, an issue which has not so far been discussed, the disincentives caused by a welfare benefits system based upon a medical notion of 'incapacity'.

In this chapter, I have grouped barriers or challenges to employment as operating on three main levels: (1) at a basic or individual; (2) structural and ; (3) perceptual/attitudinal levels. By basic or individual level, I refer to those barriers that are the result of an individual's lack of skills or work experience as well as behaviour that is challenging or problematic to other people, which are within the control or influence of the individual, with appropriate support from vocational and social support services. Operating at the structural level are barriers created by external systems including disincentives caused by the welfare benefits system, changing patterns of employment, high unemployment, a service system based on the notion of dependency, and the lack of coordination between the policies and practices of agencies at both national and local level. Among perceptual/attitudinal barriers are included the negative perceptions of employers, the scepticism of parents/carers and professionals, and blaming the individual for support and adaptations needed as a result of physical impairment rather than focusing on how workplaces need to change to be inclusive. The issues under each of these headings will now be discussed in more detail.

(1) BASIC OR INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

The fact that individuals with learning disabilities often lack the skills or qualifications that can be easily matched with the current job market and have limited experience of workplace culture and the demands of work, have difficulties interacting socially with other people and may sometimes challenge others by their behaviour, are all barriers at a basic level that have been challenged by the model of supported employment.

Lack of Job Skills & Qualifications

Individuals with learning disabilities have been denied the opportunity to work in paid employment and therefore will be lacking in job skills and/or social skills. They share many of the problems faced by other long-term unemployed people, particularly young adults. From the outset, people with learning disabilities receive little encouragement to think of employment as a viable option; there may have been little or no preparation for employment at school; their experiences will typically be of segregated services received along with other people labelled as 'learning disabled', and of institutionalisation. It is probably not surprising that many people with learning disabilities appear to have few marketable job skills, or are perceived as lacking in the social skills required to be successful at work. Being consistently excluded from environments where socially appropriate behaviour and skills are learned delays the development of these behaviours and skills (Pomeranz & Markolin, 1980; Wolfensberger, 1972). This brief quotation from Wertheimer's survey (1992a) of supported employment placements further illustrates the effects of years spent in institutions:

"Theresa's main challenges stem from her years in hospital. She will occasionally trade on her past reputation and threaten other people to get them off her back if she feels she is being put under pressure - a challenge which needs to enable Theresa to find more appropriate ways of handling difficult feelings. "
(page 28)

A woman with learning disabilities commented on the low expectations and consequent lack of experience many suffer from:

"I sometimes think of all the people left at the day centres and feel sad for them. Even if people can't read or write they should be encouraged all the time to get jobs. The problem is that people get used to going to the ATC, don't believe in themselves anymore and lose their confidence. Eventually they don't bother trying and give up. I feel strongly that this is wrong."
(Demby, 1992)

As a result of a perceived skill deficit, the pattern of employment opportunities often does not match what people with learning disabilities seem to have to offer. The types of jobs available are constantly changing, with fewer opportunities in areas calling for basic unskilled labour. A common service response has been vocational training. At the start of the study a number of projects were discovered that exemplified this approach in Scotland. For example, the 'Garvald Engine Shed' cafe and catering business in Edinburgh offered training in food processing, baking, and catering to vocational qualification standards. Another project, 'Ad-Tec', in Glasgow offered training in clerical and administrative skills with the emphasis on new technology. A training allowance was paid and Scotvec Modules in office skills were offered. One of the projects in the research study was offering two-year vocational training in catering and food hygiene. These are just some of the projects offering vocational training.

The provision of specialised training in simulated work settings to enhance work skills, and consequently a quality referred to as 'employability', has been nurtured by funders, particularly European funding (Noonan Walsh, 1991). Steele (1991c) observed that almost all the resources allocated to employment services were earmarked to training, very little being targeted at the services focusing on finding jobs with community employers. This assertion about the allocation of resources for training has been confirmed by the National Development Team's survey which found low numbers of job finders even among the staff of supported employment projects (Lister et al 1992). The body of research evidence shows that individuals with learning disabilities have difficulties transferring skills learned through vocational training in special settings to real jobs, an approach that derives essentially from the traditional 'job readiness' approach. The model of supported employment discussed in the next chapter challenges this approach.

Perceived Inadequate 'Social Skills'

Early research on supported employment found that job termination often occurred because of failure not only in work performance, but also in what is commonly referred to as social skills (Moon et al, 1990; Martin et al, 1986). Generally this means the skills needed to relate to, and mix with other people both in order to carry out the task and to be accepted at work. The NDT survey (Lister et al, 1992) found of those reported by project staff to have left or lost jobs, inappropriate behaviour was the main reason. Social skills were thus concluded to be a major predictor of success at work by many researchers (e.g. Calkins & Walker, 1990).

The mainstay of ATCs or ARCs, is of course training in social skills and independent living skills, yet their success in achieving employment placements has not been impressive to date (Seed, 1988). Ad-Tec, an agency mentioned earlier, aimed to improve social skills through relaxation techniques. The emphasis on social skills as well as work skills, aimed to increase individuals' competitiveness in the jobs market. Qualitative research studies of workplace culture confirm that learning appropriate social skills at work is in fact a complex process, and varies from workplace to workplace, according to the particular culture operating (Hagner, 1992a). Research attention has therefore shifted from focusing on the individual's inadequate social skills to the social context of each workplace (Sandow & Olson, 1991)

Supported employment has challenged the assumption that vocational skills learnt in simulated work environments can be transferred to real workplaces (Beyer & Kilsby, 1992). The model recognises the problems people with learning disabilities have in generalising skills learned in one setting to another. The dilemma is that due to lack of opportunity, many people with learning disabilities are perceived to lack the social skills thought necessary to hold down a job. Past research found that one of the most common reasons cited by employment specialists for job loss was so-called 'inappropriate social behaviour'. Other researchers have found it unhelpful to isolate social skills from specific workplaces

and work cultures. The practice of teaching social skills external to particular work settings therefore, would appear to be futile and some would argue, wasteful of resources.

Limited Work Experience

For reasons stated above, many people with learning disabilities have little or no experience of the responsibilities and implications of going out to work, such as arriving on time, operating shift systems and so on. A second response to the lack of skills and experience is to provide work experience placements in real work settings. In addition to skills and qualifications, many employers today expect prospective employees to have prior work experience. People with learning disabilities are at a distinct disadvantage in this respect, not having had many opportunities to try out their work skills. DuRand and Neufeldt (1980) commented that marked disabilities that might be noticed when a disabled person attempts a job are more often a result of limited learning opportunities and lack of experience than a function of impairment.

As a strategy, provision of work experience is most strongly associated with ATCs or ARCs (King's Fund Centre, 1984). Many people attending day centres are given the opportunity of work experience placements for one or two days a week, typically working in homes for older people, children's nurseries, charity second-hand shops, catering or gardening projects. Very often work experience is not working towards placement in paid jobs, and is thus of extremely limited value in securing real jobs. A more positive strategy for improving the experience of people with learning disabilities in work it is claimed, is to consider job sampling for limited periods of time, or as the Welsh project QUEST aptly terms it, 'job tryout' as part of a vocational service ultimately aiming to find and place people in paid jobs.

Speaking in favour of work placements, Tackney (1992, p139) elucidates the approach adopted by Mencap Pathway stating that work experience gives people "*an invaluable opportunity to experience a real working situation whilst at the same time keeping their options open.*" This author argues that people with limited experience are thus given the opportunity to make meaningful choices based on actual experience, and secondly, that while on work placement the individual continues to claim state benefits that they would lose if they were to take on a paid position. Other supported employment proponents are fundamentally and philosophically opposed to work experience placements altogether. In practice it would appear that the majority of employment projects use some form of work trial prior to placing people in paid jobs. They do differ however, in whether work placements represent a standard response or are used on occasion, depending on the needs of individuals.

Problematic or 'Challenging Behaviour'

It is frequently assumed that people with more severe disabilities and those whose behaviour has been labelled 'challenging' to others, will not be capable of employment, but this is not necessarily the case. Challenging behaviour might include physical or verbal abuse, involuntary shouting out loud and so on. Porterfield (1988), and Feinmann (1988) argue that employment should not be seen as an illusory goal for such individuals. Indeed, many comment on the positive effects of having a job on an individual whose behaviour was previously described as 'challenging'. For example, Porterfield (1988) provides this positive comment from a job finder:

"Its important to get people away from a' handicapped environment'. Often people who have a bad track record - who cause trouble in ATCs and hostels - are my best clients. The ones who are stropky have character. The 'good' ones have given up."

Feinmann (1988), an active campaigner on the right of people with severe disabilities to employment, claims that the task of employment services with people with severe handicaps is nonetheless a complex and arduous one. This author speaks from experience, having developed the project 'INTOWORK', from a sheltered workshop based within hospital grounds, into a supported employment project designed to place people with severe impairments directly into employment settings. The King's Fund (1984) commented that if a person with additional needs were to be offered opportunities of real employment, this could only be possible by ensuring that the right amount and type of support was provided to make use of the opportunity. The issue of support, of the right kind and quantity is therefore a crucial one: support could be in the form of new technological aids or for a support worker or co-worker to spend all of their working day with the person over a long period of time. In 1992, a London based project, Excel Recruitment, developed FLEET to offer employment opportunities to people who required more intensive on-going support. It was especially targeted towards those who had been labeled as having challenging behaviour (Steele, 1992). Other services have developed specifically to find employment opportunities for people with more severe disabilities, although to date this is an under-developed aspect of provision in Scotland.

(2) STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Functioning at the structural level, are a number of barriers produced by external systems. These include major disincentives caused by the welfare benefits system; changing patterns of global employment favouring more part-time positions and demanding higher levels of skill; high rates of unemployment; a service system that is based on dependency and an understanding of disability as equating with a need for care; and a general lack of coordination between the policies and practices of agencies at both national and local level.

Welfare Benefits Disincentives

One of the major barriers to employment for people with disabilities arises from the disincentives created by the current welfare benefits system. Taking on paid employment can confound benefits issues, which can be less secure than benefits (Bewley, 1997). Many people with learning disabilities are on incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, disabled living allowance and mobility allowance, all of which require medical proof of 'incapacity for work'. Proving incapacity can be difficult if someone has to reclaim benefits if a job breaks down, apart from where the Disability Working Allowance has been claimed. Many people as a result are advised either to work within the benefits disregard limits, to aim for the higher amount of 'therapeutic earnings', or to take unpaid work.

Simons (1998) concluded that the total effect of all the rules, along with the complexity of the system, is that considering a job is too capricious an undertaking for many people. For those on incapacity benefits who want to explore opportunities for paid work, the benefits system is a minefield. Problems with welfare benefits arise not least because much of the available work is low paid. The current situation makes it easier for employers to exploit disabled workers through low pay. Particularly affected are those who are living in more independent supported accommodation situations and those in residential care in receipt of the residential care allowances. Loss of benefits during a period of work usually means it will be difficult to reclaim benefits if the job ends and in reclaiming, the claimant receives reduced support for a limited period. Anyone working more than 16 hours per week risks losing all incapacity benefits. The first national survey of supported employment found that barriers in the system continued to affect 61% of their sample that remained dependent on welfare benefits while in supported employment (Lister et al, 1992).

As Steele (1991a) observed the benefits trap has prevented many people who wish to work from actually taking a job. Although jobs have been found, inflexible funding arrangements for supported accommodation limit the options - that is, they either took the job and moved out of their home; worked for the benefits disregard threshold; or stayed unemployed. Such a major disincentive means that those who are independent will be strongly advised against paid work, as they will be significantly worse off, or the work options will be limited to very part-time positions. Being in receipt of disability benefits means that the person is officially categorised as 'incapable of work', and as such can earn only the amount of benefits disregard before benefit levels are affected. The medical notion of incapacity is in conflict with the values of supported employment, which fundamentally challenge assumptions that anyone is incapable of work. Simons (1998) calculated, on the basis of the current benefits allowances, that under the present system the anomalies are such an individual would need to work 26 hours per week in a paid job before being as well off as when claiming incapacity benefits and working just 5 hours per week.

Financial calculations to find out whether the person will be worse off in work are therefore a prime consideration for the majority of disabled people contemplating paid employment. Many employment projects consider this such a fundamental issue that they include a full welfare benefits check. In 1991, The Peter Bedford Trust in London offered a small basic weekly payment below benefits disregard, which was topped up by a 'gift', credited out of a separate account administered by the Trust (Stewart, 1991). Receiving payments or gifts from Trusts is permitted within the Income Support regulations. Beyer & Kilsby (1997) found that almost half of people using supported employment services were working less than 16 hours per week with 42% having total earnings of £15 or less. Such an imperative is imposed by an unhelpful system, and is not representative of individual choice.

The significant factor in all of this has been found to be housing costs (Simons, 1998). Generally, earnings from employment determine the kind of housing to which one can obtain access, while for people with learning disabilities it is the converse: where they live determines whether and how many hours they can work. It is relatively easier for someone with learning disabilities living at home with family to take up work, providing they do not want to move to a more independent living situation. The issue is the extent to which means-tested benefits will cover housing costs. It is more challenging for those living in supported living situations or residential care to take up employment. Emerson & Hatton (1998) found that only 5% of people living in residential establishments were in employment.

A number of strategies around the so-called 'benefits trap' have been found which enable people to gain financially (even if only minimally), from the opportunity to work using existing schemes. These include: making use of the Government's Supported Employment Programme; work-based training programmes; the New Deal Programme, part of the 'welfare to work' strategy; working for therapeutic earnings; and claiming Disability Working Allowance (DWA). I will now look briefly at each of these in turn.

The Government's 'Supported Employment Programme'

The Supported Employment Programme (SEP), latterly known as the Sheltered Placement Scheme, is only open to registered disabled people who are judged to be so disabled that they will be unlikely to obtain or maintain open employment. Medical reports to that effect are required. SEP jobs are paid at the going rate through an employer wage subsidy that assumes that an individual with disabilities will not perform the job to 100%. Supported placements are available in all kinds of jobs and jobs are expected to be permanent and should last at least six months (Disability Alliance, 1998). An assessment is made of the job and the individual's capacity to undertake the task within the range of 30 - 80% capacity. Once the worker's projected capacity in the job has been agreed the rate is set between the host employer and the sponsor (for example, a local authority or voluntary organisation). The minimum an employer can pay is 30% of the going rate for the job while the maximum a sponsor will pay is 70% of full pay. Legally the sponsor, who is responsible for national insurance contributions etc.

and topping up wages to 100%, employs the worker. Many supported employment projects use this scheme, while others are fundamentally opposed to offering employer subsidies of any description, arguing that its assumptions run contrary to the fundamental belief in capacity inherent in the model of supported employment.

Work-Based Training

Government training programmes are delivered by Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) in Scotland. A range of help is available for people with disabilities wishing to take part on a training programme including individually tailored programmes, aids, equipment, adaptations to premises and equipment, a reader service for blind or visually impaired people, and an interpreter service for deaf people. One commentator found that in many ways, people obtaining a place on the government's employment training schemes were relatively better off financially (James, 1989), as they remained on Income Support whilst receiving an allowance or training premium, and travel costs. However, the downside is that participation and completion may bring into question one's status as 'incapable of work', and therefore may prompt a review of benefits entitlement resulting in the individual being worse off in the longer term.

New Deal Programme

The New Deal is part of the Government's 'welfare to work' strategy implemented in April 1998. People with disabilities can choose to enter the New Deal 'Gateway' before the mandatory six months of claiming Job Seekers Allowance that applies to the New Deal for 18-24 year olds. The 'Gateway' is intensive help to find a job and preparation for one of four New Deal options: 1) full-time education and training for up to one year leading to SVQ or equivalent and including work experience while still receiving the same amount as benefits, access to passported benefits and discretionary help with child care, special equipment and clothing, and exceptional travel costs; 2) employment option of up to 26 weeks of subsidised employment for which a wage equal at least to the subsidy is received; 3) voluntary work which attracts a training allowance or a wage from an employer; 4) or the Environment Task Force option for up to six months for which the individual receives a training allowance or wage from an employer. Anecdotal evidence to date suggests limited take-up of this scheme by people with disabilities.

The government earmarked £195 million for the New Deal for Disabled People during 1998, to support innovative schemes aimed at testing a range of proposals for helping people move into, or remain in work, and to provide personal advisers pilots. The first pilots started in October 1998 with a further six areas added early in 1999. Research to evaluate the effectiveness of innovative schemes and pilots has also been funded.

Therapeutic Earnings

According to the Disability Rights Handbook (Disability Alliance, 1998) if a doctor considers it to be of benefit to the person's health if they work, they may work up to 16 hours and earn around £48 per week, which is designated as 'therapeutic earnings', without affecting Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disability Allowance (See Regulation 3 (3) of the Unemployment/Sickness and Invalidity Benefits Regulations, 1983). There is no limit on the number of hours if the work is part of a medically supervised treatment programme while in hospital or an outpatient, or attending an institution which provides sheltered work or the person has been doing therapeutic work since 1995. Effectively an individual continues to receive the same level of benefits, and receives therapeutic earnings in addition to this. The drawbacks are that it is not always straightforward to convince the Department of Social Security of the therapeutic value of work for many individuals; secondly that the review of eligibility is always a threat; and lastly that the work may improve capacity for work and thus alter the individual's future entitlement to incapacity benefits. However, a part-time therapeutic job can be financially beneficial to some people, its greatest drawback being its insecure nature in the longer term.

Disability Working Allowance

The Disability Working Allowance (DWA) introduced in April 1992, is intended to top up low earnings for people with disabilities. It was greeted with a great deal of anticipation, which was followed by scepticism. It was supposed to fill the gap in provision for people neither wholly capable nor wholly incapable of work, as a partial capacity benefit. Effectively the DWA tops up low wages thus ensuring individuals are better off working longer hours than on incapacity benefits. It also entitles the individual to additional benefits, including free prescriptions. Burgess (1992) found that after six months of implementation, a mere 10% of applicants were in receipt of DWA, and the majority of claimants were those already in work. Other commentators (Rowlingson & Berthoud, 1996) also found the take-up of DWA to be much lower than anticipated. The most common examples of successful claims provided by Department of Employment Advisers were of people working between 16 and 20 hours per week in clerical, catering, manual or sheltered employment, and living at home (Hadjipateras & Howard, 1992). Beyer & Kilsby (1996a) commented that the major flaw of DWA is that it remains based upon the notion of incapacity - *"...it has not changed the basic rule that if you are disabled you cannot work, and if you can work you are not disabled"* (p137)

For many people, the major disadvantage is that it is means tested and involves re-application every six months on the assumption that income is likely to rise in full-time employment. It is a two-stage benefit: first the person must be in receipt of disability benefits, take a job, give up benefits, then make a claim. The rules are that if the job breaks down within two years, a return to previous levels of IB and SDA benefit is assured. If the individual previously claimed Income Support and Disability Premium, he/she would have to make a new claim, however, and if successful would have to wait one year before receiving this benefit. There is also no guarantee that the category of 'incapable of work' will not be

reviewed. In calculating whether someone is financially better off, account needs to be taken of the new amounts for rent/mortgage, council tax, prescriptions, travel, costs of buying work clothes and so on.

From October 1999 a new Disabled Person's Tax Credit will replace DWA and it is claimed, provide more generous help and make more support available to more disabled people.

Recession and High Unemployment Rates

Supported employment was conceived in the US, which has been enjoying much lower rates of unemployment than Britain for the past two decades. Economic recession and high unemployment will have a significant effect on the job market and hence on the supported employment opportunities available. However, from anecdotal evidence, service providers often use levels of unemployment as an excuse for not looking for employment opportunities. It is therefore a structural and an attitudinal barrier in that it can sometimes be used as a convenient scapegoat for inadequate employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

Despite depressing unemployment figures, the upward trend in supported employment agencies around the country and the increasing numbers of people with learning disabilities entering the workforce, challenge the inevitability argument of high unemployment (Beyer et al, 1996b; Lister et al, 1992). Projects such as the 'Outreach Project', Greenock, based in an area of high unemployment and deprivation, have shown that people with disabilities can gain employment against great odds. Lister et al (1992) found approximately half of the agencies surveyed were operating in areas of higher than average unemployment. The Employment Department's survey of supported employment (Pozner & Hammond, 1993), found many agencies reporting few difficulties in finding suitable jobs, even in areas of very high unemployment. On the contrary, these authors concluded there was good evidence to suggest that the supported employment package was attractive to employers. Further, there is a strong moral case for positive action for people with disabilities in the face of high unemployment, given that they suffer from disproportionately high unemployment rates.

Changing Patterns of Employment

The inflexibility of a shrinking employment market is sometimes quoted as a potential problem. It is an employers' market and employers can make strict demands in terms of the hours worked and place of work. Changing patterns of employment mean that for a significant proportion of the population, full-time work is no longer the norm; job sharing and temporary work are now more common practice. Tele-working or home-based working are also becoming more commonplace, as is the stipulation that individuals must be multi-skilled and can provide a portfolio of employment and experience (Handy, 1984).

Worker co-operatives also play a part in answering the needs of people who have been disadvantaged in the competitive job market. Such ventures have challenged some of the traditional notions of work. It has been argued that cooperative working provides a valuable alternative, affording people dignity and equality in the workplace through decision making systems which involve all members, having a sense of social commitment, offering members the chance to devise their own employment policies and widening the notion of work and its benefits, all while still taking financial considerations into account (Sikking, 1986, page 6-7). The best known UK examples of workers cooperatives providing opportunities for people with disabilities are in England, the Gillygate Wholefood Bakery in York, and Rowanwood furniture cooperative in Cambridge.

Service Culture Based on Dependency

There is an historic prejudice towards the provision of care services for people with learning disabilities. Two reports on ATCs in Scotland and Wales observed how the predominant service culture perpetuates low expectations, and do little to increase employment opportunities (Beyer et al, 1994; Seed, 1988). The prevailing service culture can act as a very powerful barrier. Low expectations of people with disabilities, coupled with a negative economic situation, lead to over-reliance on the more traditional models of day provision. Long-established traditions soon come to represent the way services should be. Once established, these services become powerful systems and those are difficult to change.

There is evidence of movement away from traditional patterns of service that rely on segregating large numbers of people with learning disabilities in ATCs/ARCs. As discussed in chapter 1, current day services are under review and new models of delivery based on the 'support model' and focusing on social integration is actively being considered (McIntosh & Whittaker, 1998). Some ATCs have already developed a vocational services approach and/or a supported employment service; for example, Blakes Wharf in London (Steele, 1991c, 1987; Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985). In Scotland, the approach has been rather more incremental and the number of supported employment projects remains modest (Beyer et al, 1996b; Lister et al, 1992).

Lack of Coordination Between Policy & Practice

Although a range of local employment agencies, including supported employment, has mushroomed in the past decade, these initiatives have usually been on a small scale and do not amount to a coordinated local or national policy (Barnes et al, 1998). No one authority has the responsibility for employment services for people with disabilities. The absence of coordinated policy is recognised as presenting an obstacle to the successful development of co-ordinated vocational employment services. Problems such as different agencies approaching the same pool of local employers can result in the destruction of employer goodwill. Duplication of effort clearly represents a waste of resources.

National developments which have gone some way to redressing this have included the setting up of the Real Jobs Initiative, a joint venture between the National Development Team and Training in Systematic Instruction; the All Wales Strategy and the creation of QUEST Supported Employment Agency, a collaborative venture between Cardiff University Social Services and the Mental Handicap in Wales Applied Research Unit; and the Employers Forum on Disability, a membership organisation of mainly large public and private organisations in England. Recently a Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE) was formed in addition to the national body, the Association of Supported Employment Agencies. To date this does not amount to a national coordinated policy of employment, however, and one can only hope that initiatives under the New Deal, measures to tackle the 'unemployment trap', and Social Inclusion Partnerships will address this gap. In this respect the situation in this country contrasts sharply with the policy and legislative context of the development of supported employment within the US, where the power of positive policies on the growth of supported employment services is most clearly demonstrated.

One of the unintended consequences of the New Deal Programme, which includes funding aimed at disabled people, may be that people on incapacity benefits will be competing for jobs through supported employment agencies with unemployed people for whom an employer subsidy will be offered, thus placing people with disabilities in a disadvantageous position. As Simons (1998) argued it is vital not only to co-ordinate employment policy, but also to ensure that other systems such as the social security system are simultaneously subjected to a fundamental review.

(3) PERCEPTUAL/ATTITUDINAL

Generally, low expectations mean individuals with learning disabilities are presented with limited options and choices. Yet inadequacy is still pathologised as residing within the individual, rather than with service systems and attitudes that limit their experiences. Proponents of supported employment have argued that it should not be people's right to employment that is in question, but how much support they need (McLoughlin et al, 1987). If low expectations are held about potential for learning and succeeding, then choices will probably be limited. Increase in choice is believed to increase competence in making choices. The negative cycle of low expectation is thus changed by raising expectations (King's Fund, 1984).

In order to address low expectations generally, the King's Fund Centre Working Party (1984) emphasised the importance of generating discussions at local level with all those with an interest - that is, employers, people with learning disabilities, parents, professionals and policy makers - around the rights of people with learning disabilities to work with appropriate support. The Real Work Group in Dudley in the Midlands and the Real Work Forum in England are examples of this in practice (Tonks &

Kroese, 1992). Goodwill Industries in the US is another good example of employers with experience of employing people with disabilities working to change the negative perceptions of other employers. The perceptions of employers, parents or carers, and professionals can act as either a support or an inhibitor to the employment of people with learning disabilities.

Negative Perceptions of Local Employers

The attitudes of local employers are central to realising the aspirations for real employment of people with learning disabilities. At a time of high unemployment levels and world recession, the importance of positive relationships with employers is even greater. Employment services rely on employers being receptive and willing to employ people with learning disabilities. Success in relation to the goal of real employment for people with learning disabilities depends ultimately on an attitudinal shift in employers, co-workers and the general public (Harrison & Tomes, 1990). Research undertaken in America which looked at the subjective judgments of 188 government policy makers, counsellors, supervisors, co-workers and others, of employment training for people with very severe disabilities, found positive reactions, even to the employment of those more severely disabled (Black et al, 1992).

There is less research in Britain focusing on the attitudes of employers. What there is has reported positive findings (Wertheimer, 1992b; Harrison & Tomes, 1990; Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985). Employers who have experience of employing people with learning disabilities report performances equal to, and in some respects such as attendance and reliability, better than their non-disabled counterparts over a range of jobs. Research by the Post Office, Bank of England and DuPont (Leslie, 1992) showed that disabled people took fewer days sick leave, remained with employers longer, were equally productive and had better than average safety records. One suggestion was that the experience of managing disability in their lives helped individuals to develop excellent problem-solving skills.

Generally, employers with experience of working with people with learning disabilities have the most positive perceptions (Harrison & Tomes, 1990). These authors also reported confusion surrounding the term 'mental handicap', with as many as a fifth of employers confusing the term with mental illness. The term also generated some negative associations. Negative views include a perception that workers with learning disabilities would be inflexible and unable to work faster (Shafer et al, 1987). Perceived barriers to recruitment identified were, in order of priority: difficulties in meeting employers' expectations around safety, inconsistent performance, low productivity, high supervision needs, and lack of flexibility, all of which illustrate the need for employment services to promote positive images of people with learning disabilities as employees.

Previous research has not provided conclusive evidence of the factors that will determine how sympathetic an employer will be. As Harrison & Tomes (1990, p199) comment:

"Attitudinal work in the US suggests that many employers believe such employees are capable of productive work. From experience, they have found that they perform well in terms of job stability, attendance, safety record and time-keeping; but that they are slower to learn, less productive, less flexible, and in need of more supervision than their non-handicapped counterparts. Most employers who had never employed people with mental handicaps felt they would be less valuable than their non-handicapped peers, particularly in terms of ability, turnover rate, absenteeism, emotional personality, temperament, motivation and appearance."

The main research finding is that employers without experience of employing someone with learning disabilities are more likely to perceive potential problems than those with experience. This would seem to highlight personal contact and experience as the key to dispelling myths and misconceptions.

Harrison & Tones also found that the charitable motive clearly dominated the reasons why employers had offered job opportunities. Job finance or wage subsidies also made a significant difference to the likelihood of recruiting a person with learning disabilities. Unsympathetic employers also had concerns about acceptance from co-workers or prejudice from customers.

Shafer et al (1989) in a survey of non disabled employees' attitudes toward supported employees found that the attitudes were not significantly affected by the level of learning disability, although other studies found that co-workers interacted less with those supported employees with very severe learning disabilities. None of these problems had been realised by those employers with experience. Nearly a third with experience of employing someone with learning disabilities said that there had not been any problems. Small numbers reported problems with co-workers unsure how to react and over-friendliness resulting in disruption and difficulties in finding enough suitable work. The top incentives to hiring a person with learning disabilities were probability of regular attendance; ongoing availability of assistance; high probability of long-term employment; and the availability of employees for on-site training.

Hanna & McConkey (1992) found that employers emphasised the reliability of employees with learning disabilities. Other advantages related to their own social conscience, such as personal feelings of helping someone, as well as giving the individual more respect, building their self confidence, integrating people with learning disabilities in society, and giving individuals a role in life. It would appear from this survey that there are many ways that employment services could encourage the employment of people with learning disabilities. Nearly a third saw job coaching as important. This confirms Shafer et al's (1987) findings that employers were most satisfied with the performance of those receiving supported competitive employment services.

Evidence that there are sympathetic private employers can be found from the successes of specialist employment services which have now placed thousands of people in jobs in the UK (Beyer et al, 1996b). Some employers are clearly more predisposed to employing people with disabilities, although employers one might expect to be sympathetic, such as local authorities and the BBC, have not so far led the trail, while other private employers as Brandon (1989, p9) found on visiting Anita Roddick's 'The Body Shop' have:

"We are very concerned for the welfare of the increasing numbers of people being turfed out of hospitals and institutions...we want to make contact with people in the services who have vision and energy and are able to work out new ways of integrating workers...We want to help empower people, model some good practice and influence other major companies. The private sector has a major obligation to offer employment to people with learning disabilities"

The growth of employment projects suggests that employers are becoming more ready to employ people with disabilities (Wertheimer, 1992b). The 'Two Ticks' symbol and the 'Fit For Work' awards are examples of a growing awareness among employers of the positive benefits of employing a person with a disability. O' Bryan, consultant for the Real Jobs Initiative, speaking at a conference on supported employment in 1991 questioned the common assumptions held about employers' attitudes:

"Recent surveys in the USA indicate that employers do not perceive people with more severe disabilities as being more challenging. So we may need to adjust our perceptions too!"
(Wertheimer, 1992, p7)

Scepticism & Low Expectations of Others

For most people, the expectation and goal of employment is fostered from an early age, but this is not so for people with learning disabilities. In a sense families have been disempowered by professionals who have discouraged them from holding the idea that one day their son or daughter will be in a job, perceiving this generally as 'unrealistic'. Accepting what professionals offer, parents have continued to demand a service system that perpetuates the low expectations of people with learning disabilities. This is a major challenge for employment services. The King's Fund Working Party (1984) concluded that low expectations were possibly the biggest challenge to progress in vocational services.

However, although it is easy to generalise about the over protectiveness of parents and the sometimes conflicting interests between people with learning disabilities and their carers, it is noted that it was parents, not professionals who pioneered the Mencap Pathway Scheme, out of concern for their offspring's futures. Parents were also instrumental in many of the changes occurring in America and Canada, resulting in a more advanced system of vocational services than in Britain, and more recently in the growth of the service brokerage movement.

British research has highlighted the central importance of parental and carer support to the success of the employment outcome (Wertheimer, 1992a). An Australian survey of 24 adults with learning disabilities in supported competitive employment found that parents and families played a very significant role as advocates and that such support correlated with lower support needs in general and better work performance at the job site (Clear & Mank, 1990). That human service professionals simply do not believe that employment is a realistic goal for people with severe learning disabilities is evident from the reluctance to change segregated services into supported employment options despite the success stories and innovative approaches (Wehman & Kregel, 1995).

Physical Access Problems

For some individuals, additional physical impairment presents practical challenges and therefore one of the barriers to employment will be related to physical access on account of the fact that most workplaces are not designed with people with disabilities in mind. The provision of suitable technological and other support must be seen in a social context. The advent of the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1996 has now made it illegal for an employer to discriminate on grounds of accessibility of the worksite. In addition, transport to and from work may be a problem. Practical solutions can be found in the Motability Allowance that can be used to acquire a car, and other people such as parents or staff can provide the transport backup needed (Wertheimer, 1992a).

A range of financial assistance is available to manage adaptations to the workplace, as well as to assist with transport and support at work. The Employment Service Disability Employment Advisers provide access to a range of assistance through financial aid to employers to adapt the physical workplace and special schemes. The Job Introduction Scheme offers employers a payment of around £45 (1998/99 figures) for giving a trial period of 6-13 weeks to a person with disabilities. Other schemes include Access to Work which helps with extra employment costs necessary because of a disability such as providing support workers, a communicator for someone who is deaf or has hearing impairment, a reader for someone with impaired vision, special equipment or adaptations, alterations to premises, and help with travel to work costs including adaptations to a car or taxi fares if unable to use public transport (Disability Alliance, 1998; Thomas et al, 1992). Organisations such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind, RADAR and others provide advice and information to employers.

An evaluation of special employment service schemes found that people with learning disabilities were only in receipt of two schemes, the Fares to Work Scheme (now covered under the Access to Work Scheme), and the Job Introduction Scheme (JIS), although together with people with mental illness they accounted for only 10% of JIS recipients (Department of Employment, 1990). Within existing schemes certain types of disability were over-represented: those with visual impairment; people with central nervous system diseases and spinal injuries. It was noted that these disabilities were most readily helped through new technology applications, although it is not explained why this should be the case. Many people with learning disabilities also have physical disabilities, and Armstrong & Wilkinson (1998) assert that assistive technology can mean closing the gap between inaccessibility and accessibility.

SUMMARY

From the discussion above it is clear that the obstacles or challenges to the employment of people with learning disabilities are many. These barriers have to be overcome in a number of ways which include ensuring that individuals get the support they need to overcome a lack of experience or skills; highlighting and campaigning about policy issues, such as the major disincentives inherent in the welfare benefits system and the damage inflicted by unco-ordinated policies and practices both locally and nationally; and thirdly, by constantly challenging the prejudicial attitudes of other people that keep people with learning disabilities out of the workforce.

Contrary to popular belief, high rates of unemployment do not seem to be the main problem. Of particular concern to supported employment, are the challenges posed by other people's negative perceptions or attitudes, especially those of employers. One of the reasons that the entrenched system of day programmes has not been converted as expected to integrated employment in the US, has been that despite positive evidence for supported employment, many professionals do not believe that individuals with severe disabilities are 'ready' for work (Wehman & Kregel, 1995; Agosta et al, 1993). There was a dearth of research in the UK about employers' attitudes, although what there was suggested that success in getting jobs depends to a large extent on tackling the attitudes of employers, co-workers and the general public towards people with disabilities. A number of formal organisations exist in England that bring employers together with people with disabilities and their supporters, including employment specialists. An equivalent development in Scotland was not known of at the start of the research although this had changed by the late 1990s.

It is still the case that 'problems' are perceived to lie within the individual person with learning disabilities, even though, as has been shown above, a vast number of structural and perceptual/attitudinal barriers exist that are outwith individuals' control. This suggests scope for further analysis of the structural barriers to the employment of people with learning disabilities, such as has been modelled in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's recent work exploring links between housing and supported employment (Simons, 1998). In particular, the benefits disincentives have a major impact on the nature of the employment choice offered in terms of the kinds of jobs that are sought. To date, supported employment researchers in this country have shown that the benefits system adversely affects the number of hours people can work and the wages they can earn (Beyer et al, 1996a; Bass & Drewett, 1996; Lister et al, 1992). It would seem that the welfare system largely dictates choice. Weighing up the pros and cons of giving up security of benefits income for a job that may not last for long, without the prospect of returning to previous levels of benefit, can hardly be thought of as a positive choice. The medical notion of 'incapacity' ingrained in the system seems somewhat out of step with current philosophy and practice in human services.

Despite these barriers some people with learning disabilities make it into employment. Supported employment attempts to find pathways into employment whilst having to steer through all of these

obstacles. Although there is acknowledgement of all these barriers, existing employment projects seem to concentrate efforts most on the barriers identified as operating at an individual or basic level. Unpaid job placements, vocational training and social skills training are all responses to the obstacles that exist at a basic level. Yet they will have limited impact if the root cause of many of the difficulties lies in the systems underpinning employment and welfare policy. The increasing number of people with disabilities in local employment is challenging some attitudinal barriers. One reason that work experience seems so appealing is that it enables people to experience a real working situation without losing their benefits, as well as ultimately offering meaningful choice based on real experiences. However, such strategies neglect to acknowledge that other people gain job skills and experience of work through trial and error in real paid jobs. The model of supported employment, which I will go on to examine in more detail in the next chapter, is acting to question many of the barriers that exist at an individual and perceptual/attitudinal level, but at present appears to be working within the confines of major structural barriers, rather than actively challenging them.

CHAPTER 3:

ISSUES FROM SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The drive towards integrated employment since the 1980s has been evidenced by a substantial body of research and consumer consultation that has shown conclusively that people with learning disabilities given the choice, prefer paid jobs to attendance at day-centres (Racino et al, 1998; Brooke et al, 1992; Steele, 1992; McConkey & McGinley, 1992; Jahoda et al, 1989; Brandon, 1987b; King's Fund Centre, 1984; Brandon & Ridley, 1983). Over 80% of respondents in a large scale survey of day-centre attenders during 1989-90 stated that having a paid job was either their first or second most important desire in life (Steele, 1991a).

As discussed in chapter 1, employment in integrated workplaces promotes social inclusion and socially valued roles (Callahan & Garner, 1997; Hagner & Dileo, 1993; McLoughlin et al, 1987; Wolfensberger, 1972). The right to work is not in dispute (McLoughlin et al 1987; Kings Fund Working Party, 1984; United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 23). Even though the provision of segregated day centres has dominated the landscape in the UK, the number of agencies offering employment opportunities and therefore, numbers of people in local employment, has been growing steadily as a result of the development of supported employment approaches (Beyer et al, 1996b; Wehman & Kregel, 1995; Mank, 1994; Lister et al, 1992). In this chapter, the ideas behind the 'support model' which underpins the supported employment approach, the growth of supported employment, its definition and typical processes will be explored, as will key issues from research and emerging new ideas in relation to supported employment.

THE SUPPORT MODEL

The problems of the 1990s have demanded new approaches: facility-based services and developmental approaches have not achieved community integration in ways demanded by people with disabilities and their families (Bradley, 1994a). The support paradigm has evolved from progressive movements in the field of disability over the past 20 years, representing a major shift from facility-based approaches to the provision of individual supports that aim to realise individual goals and aspirations. It has meant a shift in thinking from getting people 'ready' to move onto community jobs for example, to believing that providing the functional supports to the individual in community jobs is the most successful strategy; from

the 'readiness' model to the 'support' model or as Hagner & Dileo (1993) put it, making "*the presumption of employability for everyone*" (page 7).

This change has in no small part been induced by greater dissemination of the concept of community participation and inclusion as expressed by O'Brien's five accomplishments and Wolfensberger's principle of normalisation. Implementation of normalisation has brought the realisation that surrounding people with specialist services isolates them in their communities. The shift in thinking is from helping individuals to adapt, to finding ways of adapting the environment and providing supports to the individual. The keystones of this new paradigm are community inclusion, an emphasis on quality of life, and individual planning and support. A greater emphasis on consumer preferences is evident:

"Supports are tailored to the preferences of consumers, allowing them, where at all possible, to live and work where and with whom they wish and to spend their spare time in activities that they enjoy and with people with whom they wish to associate."
(Bradley et al, 1994b, page 494)

In human services the paradigm shift to the support model has emphasised individual choice and self-determination. It requires systems to develop that offer options for choice, support and guidance: facilitation rather than direction (Bradley et al, 1994c). The degree of choice exercised by an individual in his/her daily life will clearly be affected by the opportunities and the support available. Other terms which capture the essence of this paradigm shift includes person-centred approaches, personal futures planning, and consumer-driven services (Mount, 1994). All have in common a new type of partnership between people with disabilities and their families, and professionals, where professionals more readily accept direction from consumers. Quality becomes defined as conformity with customer requirements, and focusing on outcomes that contribute to improving the individual's quality of life, empowerment and choice.

Growth of Supported Employment

Supported employment grew from a context of dissatisfaction with the outcomes of sheltered workshops in the USA (Mank, 1994), and from the undeniable reports about the learning capacity of people with severe disabilities to learn skills once considered far too difficult or complex (Gold, 1980, 1973, 1972). Gold's ground breaking research in the US during the 1960s pioneered a practical hands-on program of task analysis known by its slogan as 'Try Another Way', making employment a realisable goal for thousands of people with disabilities. Gold led what has been considered to be a revolution in thinking about training. His work was founded on the belief that the more competent a person became, the more tolerant society would be of his/her differentness, a theory resonating with the core theme of personal competence in Wolfensberger's (1972) principle of normalisation. This powerful training technology was developed and became 'Training in Systematic Instruction' or TSI, providing the technological base for the development of supported employment.

A primary assertion of Gold's work was that people should be trained to perform marketable tasks, thus increasing their chances of employment. He also maintained that people learn best when the trainer values their human worth and capabilities. Another core value was that all people can demonstrate competence if the training meets their needs, and essentially that if a person is not learning, the trainer has failed to teach appropriately. Testing, common in traditional job readiness and rehabilitation approaches, has served only to limit people. Through this work he demonstrated, often practically to large audiences, that people with learning disabilities could acquire a level of performance comparable with non-disabled workers (McLoughlin et al, 1987). Gold has been an extremely influential force in the development of the concept, principles and practices of supported employment.

In the UK, supported employment has grown out of failure of traditional day centres to deliver integrated employment outcomes and a concern with the tendency to provide services for groups rather than individuals, and concurrent with a desire to move from segregated provision to community presence and participation (see chapter 1). The number of supported employment services in this country has grown from 5 in 1986 to around 210 in 1995, and it has been estimated that over five thousand people nationally, predominantly people with learning disabilities, are now employed with local employers (Beyer et al, 1996b). However, supported employment remains a fragile service: Beyer (unpublished paper) suggested that despite impressive advances during the last decade, *"the S. E. movement has achieved insufficient momentum for its continued growth to be assured. It could disappear as quickly as it has emerged, particularly if the flow of its current life blood, core funding from the social care field, is cut off because of reduction in public sector spending."*

Essentially as it was originally intended, supported employment facilitates competitive work in integrated settings for people with disabilities for whom employment has not traditionally occurred, and who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need ongoing support to keep their jobs. It is a highly structured approach to placing people in jobs, providing individual training on-the-job and systems for maintaining them in jobs, which, importantly, focuses on 'place-and-train' rather than on getting ready for work or 'train-and-place' (Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments, 1986, USA). As Noonan-Walsh et al (1991) emphasised, the importance of the model lies in its promotion of social integration by offering real jobs in ordinary work settings. In the USA, supported employment emerged as a nationwide initiative defined in law, and supported by a system of federal and state funding. In the UK, supported employment has developed with fragmented short-term funding from a mainly social care base, with no strategy for national funding apart from use of Supported Employment Programme funds, which some would argue do not encourage 'real' supported employment, although what this means remains the subject of much debate (Beyer & Kilsby, 1997; Beyer et al, 1996a).

Initially the model embraced four alternatives thought necessary to adapt to local employment situations and individual service requirements: three of these were group concepts that included the enclave model (groups of people with disabilities who are trained, supervised and placed among non-disabled workers in industry or business); mobile work crew model (groups that spend their working day performing service jobs in the community); and the benchwork model (employment in electronics assembly work in a service that also functions as a business enterprise); whereas under the fourth, the individual placement model, the individual is found a job with a local employer (Rusch & Hughes, 1989; Mank et al, 1986).

The individual placement model, elsewhere also called the 'job coach model', or 'supported competitive employment' (Tannen, 1993), is generally what passes for supported employment in the UK and Europe. Employment specialists undertake individualised assessments, commonly termed vocational profiles, to identify the goals and career ambitions of the individual, contact employers and locate jobs, match individuals and jobs, provide on-the-job training and support, and provide follow-on support with any workplace issues. A further description of the process of supported employment is given below. First, definitions of the model will be explored.

Defining Supported Employment

Where programmes define for themselves what supported employment is and who is receiving it, discrepancies have been found to exist between the providers and the commissioning and funding agencies. West et al (1994) drew attention to two major studies which independently identified different numbers of agencies and people served by supported employment in the USA: one relied on service agencies identifying themselves as supported employment providers (McGaughey et al, 1994); while the other relied on state agencies who contracted and paid for services to identify the number of agencies and people served (West et al, 1992a). In the UK, which does not have an equivalent funding mechanism for supported employment, issues of definition are even more fraught. The National Development Team highlighted an urgent need to agree a common definition in order to be able to communicate what it is, but also to distinguish what it is not (Wertheimer, 1992b). The latest survey of supported employment agencies in the UK adopted the following definition from the Association of Supported Employment Agencies:

"Supported employment is real work in an integrated setting with ongoing support provided by an agency with expertise in finding employment for people with disabilities"
(Beyer et al, 1996b, page 3)

The authors went on to expand definition of three elements: real work, integrated work settings and ongoing support. 'Real work' referred to work that would be done by a typical member of the workforce, excluding vocational training, work experience and work preparation and was normally paid work. 'Integrated work settings' referred to settings where the proportion of disabled workers was roughly equivalent to the proportion of people with disabilities in the general population (6%). 'Ongoing support'

referred to job support that was theoretically not time-limited. There is still no commonly accepted definition amongst commissioners and providers however.

Hagner and Dileo (1993) affirmed that supported employment is essentially a 'simple concept':

"Supported employment is a process whereby people traditionally denied career opportunities due to the perceived severity of their disability are assisted to obtain jobs in the community and provided support for as long as needed."

(Page 2)

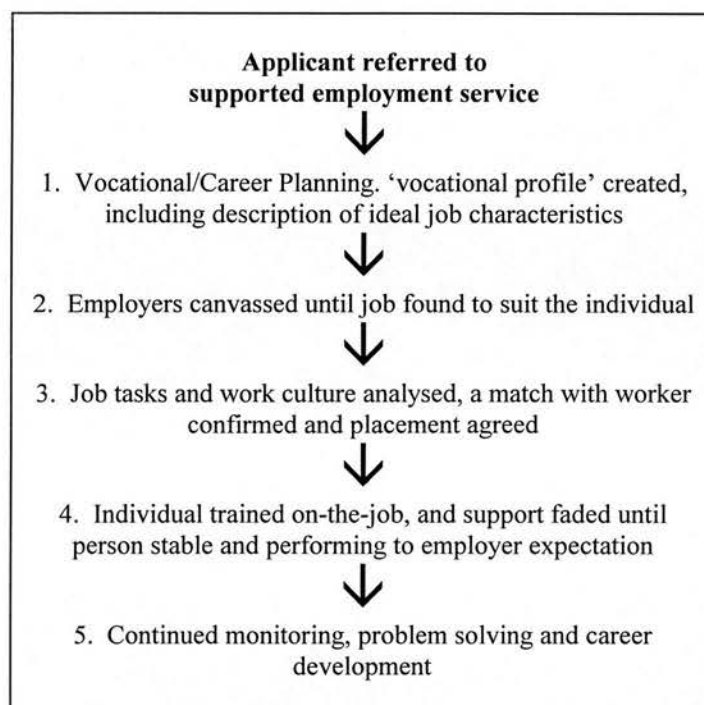
Early discussions defined it as a type of employment, not a method or type of service activity (McLoughlin et al, 1987). Although there is no consensus, over the last two decades writers in both the UK and USA have agreed on three essential elements of the model: (a) that it offers paid employment or 'real jobs'; (b) that jobs are offered in integrated settings or with community employers; and (c) that there is ongoing 'support' (Beyer et al, 1996b; Wertheimer, 1996; Pozner & Hammond, 1993; Wertheimer, 1992a; McLoughlin et al, 1987).

The definition of supported employment adopted in the USA specified in the Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments Act, 1986, that jobs must be for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Moon et al, (1990) argued that people with severe intellectual impairments can and should be able to work 20 hours per week or more, but might need the flexibility to work fewer hours initially. Some providers would and do argue that this has contributed to the unnecessary exclusion of people with more severe disabilities from supported employment services. Under the US Rehabilitation Amendments Act providers are required to target individuals with "*severe handicaps who require ongoing support in order to perform such work*". UK definitions lack statements both in regards to the minimum number of working hours and the target group. Consequently jobs for as little as one hour per week can be regarded as supported employment, and as yet only small numbers of people with more severe learning disabilities have benefitted in the UK, although it has to be said, this is also the case in the USA.

The Process of Supported Employment

Descriptions of the supported employment process in the literature differ, although there are common elements. Beyer & Kilsby (1997) divided the process of supported employment in the UK into five sets of core activities: vocational or career profiling; job search; job analysis and matching with suitable employees; on-the-job training; and lastly, ongoing support (see figure 1 below). Others have identified similar processes (Wertheimer, 1996; McLoughlin, 1987).

Figure 1: Process of Supported Employment



(Source: Beyer & Kilsby, 1997)

A brief description of each stage as depicted in the literature is described below.

1. Vocational Planning

The essential starting point for job finding and subsequently, the basis for decisions about matching individuals with jobs is planning. Planning must be organised in a systematic way to achieve a comprehensive approach to information collection about the individual, focusing particularly on the individual's personal history, skills and abilities, expressed interests and aspirations for the future, and the resources and supports available to them (Callahan & Garner, 1997; McLoughlin et al, 1987). In supported employment jargon this means creating a 'vocational profile'. This process in theory has much in common with person-centred approaches described elsewhere (Sanderson et al, 1997). The importance of individual planning is emphasised in this quotation:

"Without informal time together it is unlikely that each will begin to build rapport and get to know one another; it is unlikely that the person's desires, dreams, and preferences will ever truly be made known"

(Parent et al, 1998, page 155)

The terms 'career planning' or 'career development' have been adopted recently in place of vocational planning (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Callahan & Garner, 1997; Sowers et al, 1996; Hagner & Dileo, 1993) as these terms more accurately emphasise the importance of involving people with disabilities in determining their own employment objectives and longer-term aspirations. The literature suggests that this stage is by nature unstructured and involves getting to know the individual and their family through meeting with them in a range of settings over several months.

2. Job Search

Two distinct ways of approaching job search are generally acknowledged in the literature: (1) 'jobs for people' and (2) 'people for jobs' approaches. The first assesses an individual's skills, experience and wishes and sets about searching for a job capitalising on that individual's strengths and interests. The second approach begins with employers' needs and matches this to the skills of individual job seekers. Essentially, these approaches involve either employee or company-centred negotiations with employers. Hagner & Dileo (1993) identified a third type of negotiation with employers that they labelled as 'agency centred': that is, one where employment specialists emphasise the services they provide to the employer.

A review of thirty years of research on job placement of people with disabilities (Vandergoot, 1987), reached the conclusion that the single most important factor determining how quickly people find jobs, was the amount of time spent on the job search activity itself. Hagner and Dileo (1993, p76) suggested job searching was one of the least well-understood aspects of supported employment. These authors emphasised job search as an activity, not a single job position - *"the least efficient way to be in lots of places at lots of times is to relegate the activity to a single individual."* and advocated that all members of an employment team, consumers and their families should be involved. Research and experience has taught that the most effective approach to obtaining employment is through personal contacts and networks (Hagner & Dileo, 1993; Hagner et al, 1992b).

3. Job Analysis and Matching

The concept of 'job analysis' refers to the process of understanding how a job is performed. Employment specialists commonly assess job tasks, the physical environment, work procedures, and importantly, workplace culture. How a job is designed will foster or inhibit opportunities for social integration and natural supports. It is therefore, an important aspect of quality assurance in supported employment. This process facilitates development of a training strategy and helps toward decision-making about the job-match between employer and employee. Supported employment staff commonly develop job analysis forms to aid the process. Job analysis should naturally lead onto consideration of adaptive solutions necessary for the person who will be doing the job. The term 'job matching' refers to the action of matching the employment objectives of individual job seekers to employers' needs. How effectively this

can be accomplished will be directly related to the quality of individual career planning and the scope of job search activities. However, it is far from an exact science:

"Nobody has come up with an effective way to match the abstracted traits of a person to the abstracted factors of an occupation. Historically, vocational evaluation has served as a 'scientific' means of objectifying what for the rest of the population is a highly personal, emotional, and like it or not, learn-as-you-go process"
(Hagner & Dileo, 1993, page 52)

It is further suggested by these authors that vocational assessment for people with disabilities has sometimes served as a gatekeeping device to deny opportunities that others do not perceive to be realistic.

4 & 5. Training and Support

The supported employment model incorporates a 'place and train' approach which assumes employment outcomes are maximised when the training of individuals is implemented on site rather than through pre-vocational methods. As stated earlier, supported employment was intended to provide assistance to individuals who are not able to function in employment without some kind of support. Ongoing assistance has been thought to comprise three main functions: (1) provision of support to help an employee acquire, perform and keep a job successfully; (2) improving the quality of employment status; and (3) providing support to individuals experiencing a change in their job status (Rusch et al, 1991). It is assumed in the model that such support will vary between individuals, and will be required at different times. However, it will typically involve training on-the-job, usually involving Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI) methods, presence at the work site for a period after which support will be faded, and regular monitoring visits and/or telephone calls to the individual and/or the employer. The model presumes that there are some individuals who will require support indefinitely and for whom diminution of support would not be appropriate.

Rusch et al (1991) in summarising the research, found that supported employment has been conceptualised and implemented differently and this has resulted in support being provided for persons who did not need it and a failure to provide more intensive ongoing support to those who needed support in order to keep their jobs. The effectiveness of ongoing support has proven difficult to evaluate. The support provided to employees can be crucial in an employer's decision to hire an individual with disabilities (Tannen, 1993). However, the presence of employment specialists can inhibit social interactions with co-workers and mark the individual out as more disabled (Hagner, 1995). The emphasis on using 'natural supports' or those supports that are available 'naturally' in the workplace, has been emphasised since the late 1980s (Nisbet, 1992; Nisbet & Hagner, 1988, Nisbet & Callahan, 1987). Natural supports will be discussed below under the emerging issues from research.

SOME KEY ISSUES FROM RESEARCH ON SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Whilst the USA government invested heavily in university-based research to evaluate the development of supported employment from its beginnings as demonstration projects, this has not been the experience in the UK. The bulk of research evidence about supported employment tends to come from the USA. Several new research themes have emerged during the 1990s challenging the quality of the achievements or outcomes of supported employment, especially in relation to quality of life and job satisfaction. The main interest of this research study was in how the experience of supported employment impacted on the quality of life of people with learning disabilities, particularly in terms of its impact on social integration, choice and opportunities for controlling decision-making. The issues selected from the literature therefore closely reflect these themes.

Supported employment has clearly established itself as "*the most effective employment alternative*" (Wehman & Kregel, 1995, page 286) and most supported employees have found the experience beneficial (Test 1994; Wertheimer, 1992). In the USA, participants experienced dramatic growth in earnings compared to earnings from sheltered work (Mank 1994; Kregel et al, 1989), although financial benefits have been less overwhelming in the UK (Beyer & Kilsby, 1997; Beyer et al, 1996b); it had provided valuable opportunities for social interaction (Hagner & Dileo, 1993; Storey & Langyel, 1992; Rusch et al, 1991; McLoughlin et al, 1987); and generally individuals were more satisfied with supported employment than with traditional day services, both in this country and the USA (Bass & Drewett, 1996; Parent, 1996; Test et al, 1993)

The outcomes of supported employment were initially measured purely in terms of wages, job retention, and specifically cost-benefits (Beyer & Kilsby, 1992; Rusch et al, 1991). In the mid-1990s researchers began to pinpoint its underachievements as currently implemented. Mank (1994) claimed that in comparison to the rest of society, supported employees "*neither make enough money to change lifestyles nor live above the poverty line*" (page 9). Wage increases were most marked for those who retained their original jobs suggesting that post-placement support was critical (Rusch et al, 1997). Supported employment was often only a part-time option thus providing policy-makers with justification for maintaining segregated settings to fill the rest of the week (Beyer et al, 1996a; Mank, 1994). In looking at what was referred to as 'second generation issues' (Test et al, 1993), including providing quality services, quality of life issues, consumer satisfaction, career movement and the person-centredness of supported employment, its outcomes were found wanting (Wehman & Kregel, 1995; Mank, 1994; West et al, 1994).

Despite the many success stories and significant innovation (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Callahan & Garner, 1997; Hagner & Dileo, 1993), there are significant issues about limited access, the quality of outcomes, and with the fact that refocusing the investment in facility-based services to community-based employment services has been taken up less enthusiastically than had been expected (Mank, 1994;

Wehman & Kregel, 1995; West et al, 1992). Expectations have been raised but not met. Mank (1994) qualifies this criticism by highlighting that the contrast is made between the quality of innovations and a failure to achieve broad change through adoption of the model of supported employment, not with the model per se. Lewis et al (1998) subsequently emphasised the need for more and better supporting evidence about the outcomes of supported employment, and for devising better methods of evaluating its efficiency and effectiveness, including looking more comprehensively at the multidimensional nature of outcomes and comparing alternative supported employment models. Three main areas as they pertain to the research study, will be explored in more depth below: access to the service, social integration and quality of life outcomes of supported employment.

Limited Access for People with Severe Disabilities

Supported employment was designed primarily to benefit people with severe disabilities who would otherwise not enter the workforce (Parent et al, 1992). However, most supported employment services have not concentrated on people with more severe disabilities, with some exceptions such as the project 'A Chance to Work' in Liverpool (Mapp, 1994), and others that have been described in the literature (Wertheimer, 1992a). Scottish Office statistics presented in chapter 1 showed that for people with learning disabilities generally, the balance of provision and resources in Scotland were in favour of specialist day services. The vast majority of people with severe learning disabilities in the USA also continue to be served in segregated work and non-work settings (Mank, 1994; Albin et al, 1994; Magis-Agosta, 1994; West et al, 1992; Kregel & Wehman, 1989). Studies confirm that rather than realigning organisational culture and replacing facility-based services, supported employment has become in some cases, an additional service option provided by rehabilitation organisations. This is despite the obvious conflict of core values and difficult resource issues (Albin et al, 1994), and is in "*stark contrast to supported employment's initial vision of extensive and systemic change*" (Mank, 1994, page 12). As Mank comments further:

"Despite supported employment's rejection of the "readiness model", a recent survey of administrators or vocational programs suggests that as many as 60% of those responding considered individual "readiness" to be a major barrier to developing supported employment...The result is little access...for people with the most severe disabilities."
(page 11)

Individuals with more severe disabilities and/or behaviour that is challenging to others, have been excluded through programmatic and attitudinal barriers. Kregel & Wehman (1989) concluded that the under-representation of those with severe disabilities was down to a lack of effective delivery technologies, low expectations, and social policies that allowed rather than promoted their inclusion in existing programmes. Studies that have examined the employment outcomes of specific individuals with severe learning disabilities have shown that significant benefits can be gained from supported employment (Kregel, 1995; Moon et al, 1990)

Supported Employment & Social Inclusion

"Integration must be a central part of supported employment in all aspects of marketing, job matching, training, and supporting individuals in employment; not an afterthought, not an add-on, but the centrepiece of supported employment",
(Mank 1988, page 143)

The development of supported employment has been built upon an assumption that physical presence in ordinary workplaces will lead to social participation and interactions with non-disabled people, but research has challenged this assumption. The professional literature is awash with claims about the benefits of integrated employment, especially in terms of the positive effects on social inclusion and acceptance of people with disabilities as valued productive members of the community (Wolfensberger, 1972). One of the key reasons that employment is promoted lies in the opportunities it affords for social interactions with non-disabled people (Callahan & Garner, 1997; Rogan et al, 1993; Nisbet & Callahan, 1987; Porterfield & Gathercole, 1985). It offers both proximity and connection through shared experience with non-disabled people, both of which are pre-requisites of the development of friendship (Wehman & Kregel, 1998).

However, social integration or inclusion is a difficult concept to define: *"integration is easier said than done"* (Storey & Langyel, 1992, page 46). Parents, professionals and self advocates have all expressed concern about the quality of integration experienced by supported employees (Parent et al, 1991). Research has generally found wide variations, and although strategies have been proposed to promote social integration including social skills instruction, role play and problem solving, self management and natural supports, few researchers have measured social networks, friendship patterns or used global measures of integration (Storey & Langyel, 1992). Biklen & Knoll (1987) reported that people with severe disabilities may be placed in a setting without becoming part of it, and Rusch (1991) found that co-workers associated during the day and assumed evaluation and training roles with supported employees but rarely invited them to share activities outwith the worksite. Little is known about how supported employees feel about these situations.

Whether the person is truly integrated at work is a challenging question to answer and there appears to be no single indicator; it is a complexity of factors (Knox & Parmenter, 1993; Parent, et al, 1991; Gaylord Ross, 1987). The extent to which employees with disabilities are integrated into their work settings and communities is not really known. Early reports about reasons for losing jobs identified social reasons as the most significant, and concerns about finding ways to improve work performance fuelled a research interest in studying social interactions (Calkins & Walker, 1990; Salzberg et al, 1988; Martin et al, 1986; Greenspan & Shoultz, 1981). Supported employment researchers have tended to examine the level and quality of social interactions at work and to assume that this is synonymous with social integration (Hughes et al, 1998; Knox & Parmenter, 1993; Chadsey-Rusch, 1988).

Integration at work has typically been perceived as working alongside co-workers who are non-disabled, receiving training and instruction from non-disabled supervisors and co-workers, sharing breaks, and participating generally in the social culture of the organisation whatever that may be, although the capacity of the work setting and the outcomes for the individual will differ (Parent et al, 1992; Shafer & Nisbet, 1988; Nisbet & Callahan, 1987). It is now increasingly being recognised that in relation to vocational integration, the environmental capacity of the work setting for integration has to be measured as well as the supported employee's realised participation (Parent et al, 1992; Shafer & Nisbet, 1988).

Different work settings have been found to afford different opportunities for social integration. Storey and Horner (1991) suggested that individual features of the jobsites, rather than the job model, determined levels of social integration. Hagner (1992a,b), through qualitative research methods identified that aspects of work culture had a bearing on the quality of the integration and work experience. A review of studies assessing social integration in employment settings between 1985 and 1995 (Hughes et al, 1998), suggested that social integration was affected by workplace culture to the extent that measures derived in one work setting might not be valid in another environment - *"It is unlikely that the same behaviors that are expected for a secretary, for example, would be expected for a parking lot attendant"* (p181).

An implicit level of agreement among researchers observing work site interactions regarding their perceived importance and relevance as measures of social integration was reported by Hughes et al's (1998) review of the employment literature, although these authors question the social validity of such measures. Standardised measures are questionable on two counts: 1) they have in the main, been based upon employers' perceptions of critical workplace skills rather than the perceptions of co-workers or supported employees and therefore may not be measuring social integration; and 2) they ignore the uniqueness of workplace culture as it is spurious to suggest that a list of identified behaviours appropriate in one setting are appropriate at work in general. Hughes et al proposed that future research attention should focus on the behaviours that non-disabled co-workers valued, and measure their occurrence among supported employees and co-workers, looking for and describing examples of successful social integration. Documenting instances where people are accepted and included would concur with the research approach promoted at various times by Robert Bogdan and Steven Taylor (Taylor et al, 1995; 1989; Bogdan et al, 1989a, 1987) in advocating for a 'sociology of acceptance'.

The process of facilitating integration therefore has been an ongoing critical development issue for supported employment, particularly in relation to whether integrated employment is necessarily empowering for all individuals (Shafer & Nisbet, 1988). There is still relatively little attention paid to how people with learning disabilities feel about social integration issues. Workplaces are complex social settings (Hagner & Dileo, 1993; Henderson & Argyle, 1985). A fundamental issue is that there are many different views about what constitutes social integration (Chadsey-Rusch et al, 1997). If a consensus

proves difficult to reach, these authors are in no doubt that the final decision on desired integration outcomes should be made by the direct consumers, the supported employees themselves.

The role of the employment specialist in helping or hindering social integration has come into question (Nisbet & Hagner, 1988; Nisbet & Callahan, 1987). Such concerns have generally been subsumed under the place of 'natural support' in supported employment.

Natural Support

Hagner & Dileo, (1993, p 38) wrote: *"It is easy to be misled by the term 'supported employment', because as a label for a type of service to workers with disabilities...it makes job support a professional service"*. From a workplace culture perspective, current knowledge suggests that interventions should not ruin or bypass naturally occurring supports, and they should fit in with work settings as well as with the individual. The ideas around using natural supports in workplaces have appeared in response to growing criticism of the poor integration outcomes of supported employment, and a recognition that the presence of specialist job-coaches may inhibit social relationships from developing (Nisbet & Hagner, 1988). Natural support strategies have since been incorporated into employment policy in the USA (1992 Rehabilitation Act Amendments) although it has been suggested that this has been done without an adequate body of systematic research, or consensus over definition of the terms (Test & Wood, 1996). One of the worrying implications of this has been an assumption by some that long-term funding of support is therefore not necessary (Butterworth et al, 1996). A useful working definition has been proposed for researchers and practitioners, which emphasises natural supports both as an outcome, and in relation to the role of employment specialists:

"Assistance provided by people, procedures, or equipment in a given workplace or group that
a) leads to desired personal and work outcomes,
b) is typically available or culturally appropriate in the workplace, and
c) is supported by resources from within the workplace, facilitated to the degree necessary by
human service consultation"
(Butterworth et al, 1996, page 106)

There is an assumption that support is naturally available to supported employees in workplaces if only employment specialists can find ways to tap into it (Henderson & Argyle, 1985). Mank (1996b) also suggests that tapping into this natural source of support represents a necessary and 'natural' development for supported employment's partnership with business. A contrary view has been forwarded that the notion of natural supports perpetuated a 'normalisation mentality' or a tendency to expect people with disabilities to conform to societal norms (Rusch & Hughes, 1996). In support of learning to utilise natural supports, Rhodes et al (1991) predicted that the future of supported employment relied upon employers' ability to develop the skills, knowledge and will of all employees, and the human service system's ability to support businesses in doing so. On a more sobering note Forest & Pearpoint (1992, p70-71) observe:

"Let's not romanticize the notion of...supports. When we look at people with disabilities who actually are managing in this society...we see that they are few and far between. We also see that it was blood, sweat and tears that brought them to that...and not simply good luck."

Although several authors refer to 'natural supports' as a concept or a strategy (see Butterworth et al, 1996; Rogan et al, 1993), others suggest that it should be perceived of as an approach, or thirdly as a "*principle of the most natural interventions*" (Hagner, 1996, page 181). Others have taken the principles of natural support and compiled collections of strategies to work in partnership with individuals as a way of promoting the self-determination of people with disabilities (Daeschlein, 1993). Test & Wood (1996) in reviewing the literature on natural support found limited empirical evidence that use of natural supports was improving supported employment procedures or individual outcomes. Research has also reported supported employment staff to be generally unclear about their role in implementing natural supports (Hagner et al, 1995), despite suggestions by some that natural support had become axiomatic with the implementation of supported employment (Mank, 1996a), and further that natural supports were applied in a variety of different ways (Murphy et al, 1996).

Quality of Life

Quality of life has only recently become the focus of research in supported employment (Matson & Rusch, 1986). The most frequently cited quality of life dimension in the professional literature is social relationships and social inclusion. Job satisfaction is closely related to opportunities to work alongside others (Moseley, 1988), and Sinnott et al (1991) found a positive relationship between supported employment and quality of life as defined by environmental control, community involvement and perception of personal change, compared to sheltered employment outcomes. Supported employees scored higher in the number of leisure activities, self-esteem, mobility, job skill perceptions and perceptions of changes in income. There are many claims that supported employment positively affects the quality of life of persons with learning disabilities (Wertheimer, 1992a; McLoughlin et al, 1987; King's Fund Centre, 1984)

Changes in community participation as a result of supported employment, however, have rarely been explored. Knox & Parmenter (1993) established that despite many positive benefits from supported employment, many individuals with disabilities remain on the periphery of the work environment - in the work setting, but not of it. Other researchers have similarly found high levels of individual satisfaction with supported employment, including support for the assertion for increased autonomy, control and choice, and that friendships at work were important (Test et al, 1993). However, the broader impact of supported employment on quality of life still remains fairly uncharted territory.

EMERGENT IDEAS

In recent years there has been a perceptible shift in focus of the literature towards better partnerships with users (Mank, 1994). There is potential for creating totally new relationships between employment specialists and people with disabilities and their families. In the paragraphs below I have tried to encapsulate this debate under four main headings: person-centred planning approaches, consumer choice and satisfaction, self-determination and individual career planning.

Person-Centered Planning Approaches

Despite much of the rhetoric of supported employment extolling its individual focus and consumer empowerment (Brooke et al, 1992), one of the major criticisms made of supported employment of late has been the tendency of employment specialists to make major decisions on behalf of people with learning disabilities (Parent, 1996; Knoll & Racino, 1994; West & Parent, 1992a; Brooke et al, 1992). Around the mid 1990s, connections were made between supported employment and emerging person-centred planning approaches. Person-centred planning has been defined as a set of strategies to help find and create ways for an individual to participate fully in his/her community (Wolf-Branigin et al, 1998; Sanderson et al 1997; Mount 1995; Bradley et al, 1994b; Forest & Pearpoint, 1992). It starts by exploring individual aspirations and 'dreams'. More recently it has been shown how person-centred planning approaches can be used more effectively to enable individuals to direct their own careers and enhance long term employment and career satisfaction (Kregel, 1998; Sowers et al, 1996; Steere et al, 1995).

These new approaches are reflected in the idea of regarding employment specialists as coaching individuals not on specific work tasks, but on how to be involved in career planning, job seeking, and working with co-workers to find solutions to learning and job performance issues (Sowers et al, 1996). Supported employment and person-centred planning processes both share an interest in finding individual solutions. However, the often-used term of individual 'dreams' in person-centred planning remains complex in relation to finding jobs, and somewhat more elusive to measurement. A 'dream' in addition to a train of thoughts and images experienced during sleep, is defined in The Chambers Dictionary as "a vision, a distant hope or ideal, to see or imagine as in a dream". 'Aspiration' is used here as a way of stating dreams in more general terms. The dictionary definition of 'aspiration' is "having an ambition, a craving, a desire, a dream, a hankering". A quotation from Sanderson et al (1997, p 70) writing about dreams and person-centred planning further illustrates their elusive nature:

"People dream in different ways. For people who are deprived and oppressed, the dream may be very small and simple - to have some peace and quiet, to be able to come and go. Some people touch their dream by thinking about what they would do if they won the Lottery or if they were told they only had six months to live."

"Some people's dreams are about external things - things they want to do, places they want to go. Some people's dreams are more about a state of mind or about their spirit."

The importance of adopting a person-centred approach to supported employment was underlined by Hagner & Dileo (1993) who claimed the following benefits: job seekers invest more in the process; the employer contacts made are broader in scope and more creative; the individual is more motivated to succeed and keep the job; jobs are more specifically tailored to the individual; and the chances of social integration are greater.

Consumer Choice & Satisfaction

Related to the notion of consumer or person-driven services is the need to ensure choice and measure consumer satisfaction with supported employment. The few studies focusing on direct consumers' satisfaction, report general satisfaction with broad social goals, programmes, procedures and outcomes of supported employment (Parent, 1996; Test, 1994; Moseley, 1988). Few studies have deployed qualitative methods to examine satisfaction from a range of perspectives, and few have taken a longitudinal perspective to answer questions such as whether the reported high levels of satisfaction with jobs continues over time. Measures of satisfaction should be drawn from multiple sources including observations at workplaces, interviews with supported employees and interviews with employers and the family (Hagner & Dileo, 1993). Although Parent (1996) found high levels of satisfaction generally, she also found parts of jobs that people would like to change, and many did not see themselves remaining in the same job indefinitely. Bass & Drewett (1996) found that individuals in supported employment in the UK were more satisfied with their activities at work than in their previous day service.

In relation to the kinds of jobs occupied by most supported employees, Moseley (1988) reviewed the literature pertaining to blue collar workers which equated greater job satisfaction with a number of factors: control over the task and conditions of work; functioning as part of a team and living in a community in contact with one's co-workers; higher, more equitable pay; and performing work tasks of a complexity sufficient to hold one's interest. The importance of matching people with jobs that reflected their interests and abilities was thus underlined by reference to the job satisfaction literature:

"The idea that persons with mental retardation, for example, excel in dull repetitive tasks appears to be based on handicappist prejudice rather than evidence."

(Moseley, 1988, p217)

Limited research attention has been paid to measuring outcomes such as consumer likes and dislikes and satisfaction with the goals, procedures and outcomes of supported employment, or with collecting a range of data from others including carers and employment specialists in order to test the 'social validity' of the model (Test, 1994).

Self-Determination & Employment

The notion of self-determination and quality of life are linked in underlining the importance of choice and control over decision-making processes and the outcomes of supported employment (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; West, 1996; Parent, 1996; Wehmeyer, 1996; Brooke et al, 1995; Mank, 1994). During the second half of this century the independent living and disability rights movements, influenced by civil rights groups, deinstitutionalisation, consumerism, and the notion of self-help were gaining momentum (Ward, 1996). These movements emphasised the right to integration and meaningful equality of opportunity. In his historical account of the development of self-determination, Ward (1996) argues that the self-advocacy and self-determination movements both grew from the normalisation principle first advocated by Nirje in Sweden (see chapter 1 for discussion of normalisation). A number of writers now emphasise the importance of consumers controlling their vocational destinies through self-advocacy (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Racino & Whittico, 1998; Brooke et al, 1997; Wehman & Kregel, 1995).

Although the model of supported employment has expanded the employment options and quality of work life for many people with disabilities, some authors now argue that it is primarily controlled by agencies and that employment specialists could do more to advance the self-determination of people with disabilities (Sowers et al, 1996). Developments in the area of natural supports mentioned above potentially represent the beginning of a shift in this control and in encouraging the involvement of people with disabilities and their families in the whole process (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Hagner & Dileo, 1993). The concept of self-determination has also been interpreted as a technology as illustrated in the following quotation:

"In essence, self-determination represents a set of techniques that enable the worker to learn how to set goals, to plan their actions, to monitor their own performance, and to adjust their performance in the light of what they have achieved."

(Beyer & Kilsby, 1996a, page 136)

In the support paradigm, the task is to assist individuals to understand the options available and support them to make informed choices. In this context self-determination means people with disabilities having more say in the decisions that affect their careers. Ward (1988, p2) defined it as *"the attitudes and abilities which lead individuals to define goals for themselves and to take the initiative in achieving those goals"*. In relation to supported employment, some of the recommendations to build self-determination into the process include ensuring that job search and matching activities are clearly focused on individuals' career objectives, and their motivations and needs, and finding ways to ensure that work and career preferences are developed from a range of options (West, 1996)

Individual Career Planning

Researchers have discovered that although supported employment by definition assumes a need for ongoing support, job placement is very often perceived as final, and support as temporary (Pumpian et al, 1997). This research suggests further that helping people to find another job is often an afterthought in the supported employment process and that changes in jobs are associated with failure, so that retraining becomes a reaction to that failure rather than a positive event. Pumpian et al (1997) contrasted models of career development for the general population that assume changing jobs to be an integral part of the process. Parent's (1996) research on job satisfaction found that an initial entry-level job did not automatically lead on to a long-term career. A shift from supporting jobs to supporting careers has become an important change in emphasis for supported employment (Wehman & Kregel, 1995; Mank, 1994; Hagner & Dileo, 1993). In the past, supported employment has not taken factors such as the status of jobs and advancement opportunities sufficiently into account in determining suitable job matches (Sowers et al, 1996; Moseley, 1988). Self advocates now demand not just integrated jobs, but 'good jobs' with good pay and benefits, enjoyable work that enables a contribution, and 'quality' education, career planning and the possibility of advancement (Racino & Whittico, 1998).

SUMMARY

Since the 1980s, the model of supported employment has facilitated integrated employment for thousands of people with learning disabilities. Developments have been more extensive in the USA but the number of supported employment agencies in the UK has been growing (Beyer et al, 1996). It has unfortunately remained on the periphery of policy however, with the majority of people with severe disabilities in the USA still attending segregated centres or remaining out of work (Magis-Agosta, 1994; Albin et al 1994), while in this country, most attend Adult Resource Centres (Scottish Office Statistics, 1998).

Demonstrations of success of the supported employment model have not had the impact on policy that was predicted and hoped for (Wehman & Kregel, 1995; Mank, 1994). That the option of meaningful employment has become available for a significant minority in Scotland through the efforts of supported employment must be of policy and practice interest nonetheless.

Supported employment has been conceptualised and implemented in different ways. The issue of a lack of consensus over its definition has resulted in various services being interpreted as supported employment. As with implementing normalisation, the widespread adoption of the ideas will be accompanied by, at times, a superficial understanding, with the consequence that all manner of services and practices may be labelled under the rubric of 'supported employment'. Tyne (1995) highlighted the concept of 'dynamic conservatism', the condition described by Schon (Argyris & Schon, 1978), to

illustrate how revolutionary ideas appear to be taken on by organisations without effecting any significant change in how they operate. In the field of supported employment, this phenomenon can perhaps be found in the provision of sheltered workshop placements and unpaid work placements being considered as supported employment, and in the unquestioning acceptance of integrated work for nominal amounts of pay.

The development of supported employment has emerged from the shift to the support paradigm with strong roots in the advocacy and disability movements, and therefore emphasising equality and social integration. However, it also emerged out of an era that Bradley (1994a) has identified as developmental, with strong beliefs in the capacity of all people to grow and develop, through actively employing complex teaching approaches whose main emphasis is with expanding individuals' skills. That there may be different philosophies and underlying beliefs operating throughout the supported employment system, may be one reason why researchers have found differences between agencies in terms of promoting self-advocacy as opposed to making major decisions on individuals' behalf, and in whether they emphasise skill acquisition and personal competence over individual choice and self-determination.

One of the major issues to emerge from this review of supported employment research is its apparent failure in the area of social integration. Not all stakeholders seem to agree on what they consider to be 'social integration' and there is a glaring gap in the research knowledge about the nature of acceptance and the quality of relationships at work. However, the ideology of quality of life emphasising personal choice and self-determination in relation to supported employment, underline the pressing need to better consult and involve people with learning disabilities in defining integration and quality of life outcomes. Key concepts for supported employment in the future that have been identified in the literature have challenging practical implications, including working at better partnerships with consumers so that services are designed and provided with, rather than to individuals; and secondly changing the role of employment specialist from that of expert to one of facilitator, promoting choice, self-determination and career planning.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter an account is given of the research design, methods of data collection and analysis deployed in the study. This is framed within statements about the study's aims and its theoretical context. Methodological limitations and ethical considerations are discussed at the end of the thesis in chapter 10. The theoretical context was influenced by contemporary developments in the field of qualitative research, in particular the development of a 'critical social science' paradigm (Felske, 1994), and powerful arguments in favour of research which affects social change (Oliver, 1996; French, 1994; Morris, 1994). While an attempt was made to take cognisance of such developments in framing the study, there were difficulties of meeting these ideals within the limited resources of the Ph.D. enterprise. It was also impossible to anticipate at the start of the study some of the advances in thinking and methods which have since taken place, including the emphasis on involving people with disabilities as co-researchers.

STUDY AIMS

The primary aim of the research was to investigate the impact of supported employment on the lives of individuals with learning disabilities: to explore the subjective experience of securing a job through supported employment and its meaning for individuals, particularly focusing on the reality of expected outcomes such as social integration and a better quality of life.

A number of subsidiary aims were also identified. The study aimed to discover how supported employment enhanced individuals' rights and quality of life, and the role others, including relatives and professionals, played in determining both expectations and employment outcomes. Information was collected on the jobs found, wage levels, and the job support received. Limited information was collected about the variety of employment settings.

Additionally there were methodological aims. A growing body of researchers have advocated use of qualitative methods to ascertain the views and perceptions of people with learning disabilities, and increasingly favour techniques borrowed from anthropology and ethnography (Booth et al, 1990; Goode, 1990; Flynn, 1986; Edgerton, 1984). Some of these have used innovative methods to aid understanding and communication during interviews, including the use of graphics, video and photographs in question formats (Holm et al, 1994; Booth, 1990). Such methods have not reportedly been used in the field of supported employment research.

There is no consensus on the best way to tap the views of people with learning disabilities, particularly about complex issues such as personal feelings and aspirations. Previous researchers have reported a number of problems, particularly with 'acquiescence' or a tendency to agree with the researcher, and 'recency', a term used to describe the tendency to choose the most recent option (Sigleman et al , 1986, 1982, 1981, 1980). Other researchers have emphasised the need to deploy a range of methods including qualitative approaches (Barnes, 1994). In this research people with learning disabilities were considered to be the most valid source of information on their experiences, particularly in respect of the quality of their lives, and satisfaction with a job and the process of supported employment.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

In discussing the theoretical context, I focus on three main influences on the design and methods of the research: the qualitative research paradigm; the phenomenon of learning disabilities and the concept of quality of life.

(1) Qualitative Research Approach

"The "choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked and the questions depend on their context" (Nelson et al, 1992, p2), what is available in the context, and what the researcher can do in that setting."
(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p2)

Research methods are chosen to suit a purpose, the problem determining the techniques (Kane, 1987). A qualitative research approach was chosen for this study because this was believed to offer the best means, of exploring subjective experiences and meanings. Some of the most successful and illuminating work that had sought the views of people with learning disabilities had been undertaken by researchers adopting a qualitative approach.

Lofland & Lofland (1984) placed qualitative methodology within a certain epistemology, whose central tenets are that face-to-face interaction is the fullest condition of participating in the mind of another person, and second that this is necessary to gain social knowledge. The ultimate appeal of qualitative research was the multi-method focus and potential for an in-depth investigation of subjective experiences. Particularly appealing was that a qualitative approach would not seek to find an ultimate 'truth', but rather to gain understanding of different phenomena from a range of perspectives.

Qualitative research is anything but a unified set of principles, however (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research means different things to many different researchers, and can originate from wholly opposing paradigms and academic traditions. There are separate and detailed literatures on the many methods and approaches, which there is not space to discuss properly here. I will try instead to anchor the study in the qualitative research tradition by discussing the major influences from writings on qualitative research methodology on the present study.

‘Interpretive social science’ is an alternative paradigm to positivism underpinning important disability research of the 1990s. It is now a commonly-accepted paradigm, and one which fits well with a study that accepted a plurality of realities and interpretations, and aimed to understand how people perceived and felt about the social event of having a job, and the meanings given to different phenomena. Such an approach I would argue, both draws from and builds upon the existing body of knowledge about supported employment.

Qualitative research encapsulates a range of paradigms, histories, strategies and techniques of inquiry and analysis, one of which is the approach known as phenomenology. In designing the study there was a strong argument in favour of a phenomenological approach from the start. Phenomenological approaches in research by definition, attempt to experience something as others perceive it. Taylor & Bogdan (1984), defined the province of phenomenologists as *committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor’s own perspective...The important reality is what people perceive it to be.*” (page 2). Phenomenology treats subjectivity as a topic for investigation in its own right (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994). However, structuralists and post-structuralists have heightened the awareness of language lying outwith individual control (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994; Levi-Strauss, 1963), thus highlighting the importance of considering the presence of myths and competing discourses in the analysis of subjective accounts.

What is often absent from consideration of the theoretical standpoints in texts on qualitative research, is a consideration of disability. In contrast, most texts include a feminist, ethnic or cultural perspective. However, there is now a growing body of critical research focusing on disability, including the writings of researchers who themselves have disabilities.

(2)Phenomenology of Learning Disabilities

This research focused centrally on the experiences of people labelled as ‘learning disabled’. The term ‘learning disabilities’ is now examined along with the growing body of research presenting the case for listening more closely to the voices of people with learning disabilities.

Classification of Learning Disability

Jenkins (1989) identified three conventional models of classifying people with learning disabilities: (1) the medical model emphasising physiological disorder or damage to the brain and central nervous system; (2) the psychological model, or impaired intellectual functioning; and (3) the behaviourist model relating to competence in routine adaptive behaviours. In recent years the 'social model' focusing on the social barriers, restrictions and oppressions faced by people with disabilities has become more established.

Historically, the IQ (Intelligence Quotient) test has been the main indicator of intellectual disability, that is, an IQ between 50-70 is often taken as showing 'mild learning disabilities' and an IQ below 50 as indicating a 'severe learning disability'. In recent years an individual's ability to adapt to their environment and behaviour has also become the focus of measurement. Although claimed to have some practical usefulness in assessment of need, adaptive behaviour scores have been dubbed "*the tool of 'readiness' ghettos*" (Felske, 1994). No acceptable correlation between IQ and adaptive behaviour exists, nor a single definition of learning disabilities which could be adopted in this study.

In tracing the historical development of classification, knowledge of causation and epidemiology of learning disabilities, Race (1995) highlights the controversy over the classification by IQ, especially in the US, the strong moral undertones to terms such as 'moral defectives' in the first half of this century, and the problems with 'measuring' by adaptive behaviour scales. His description is of a "*chequered career of attempts at classification*" (p39). Not only is there dispute among practitioners and researchers regarding the definition and classification of 'learning disability' (Malin, 1995), some authors completely reject this concept altogether:

"the system that is used to classify people as either 'retarded' or 'normal' is wrong and misleading. It is erroneous to classify people as retarded because it does not produce the kinds of services that it is in their best interests to receive"
(Bogdan and Taylor, 1982, p217)

These authors conclude that it is both wrong and misleading to suggest that 'learning disabilities' is an objective or measurable fact. Powerful evidence exists to suggest that labels thus far have not served individuals well, but have separated and treated those thus labelled in inequitable and devaluing ways (Oliver, 1996; Race, 1995; Bodgan & Taylor, 1982; Wolfensberger, 1971). Race (1995) showed that definitions change over time and are concerned with describing 'defects' in terms that are culturally defined rather than stating what 'it' is. Professionals however, have focused on knowledge of causation or aetiology, despite the fact that for the vast majority of those described as learning disabled, no known cause can be identified (Race, 1995). Edgerton (1993) asserts that it is a heterogeneous concept.

In recognition of the controversies within the classification debate, a specific measure of 'learning disabilities' was not used as an organising factor in the study. I was therefore not so much concerned with measuring 'learning disability' as such as with what was the experience of people labelled as 'learning disabled' in supported employment.

Hearing the Voices of People with Learning Disabilities

One of the inherent tensions in a qualitative study aiming to hear the voice of 'others' stemmed from the fact that I, as the researcher, do not live with that label. Given mounting criticisms of qualitative approaches claiming to interpret other people's words, this research is open to accusations from some quarters (Oliver, 1996). Such critics have argued that non-disabled people researching disabled people, import contradictory stances, politics, perspectives and histories to research which often go unacknowledged.

In common with other studies, this research started with an assumption that people with learning disabilities have often had distinctive experiences as a result of being labelled 'learning disabled' and as such have a unique perspective on the world. Until fairly recently the idea of including people with learning disabilities in research would have been dismissed out of hand, although this is now changing (Simons, 1994). A literature review of user studies found only five British studies in 1984 which had sought the opinions of people with learning disabilities while five years later, twenty British papers on the topic as well as many more from the USA, New Zealand, Ireland and Israel had appeared (Simons et al, 1989). They concluded that *"people using mental handicap services, given the right context, can make perfectly sensible and illuminating comments on their experiences."*(page 16).

In the past, academics perceived people with learning disabilities to be incapable of a "*coherent phenomenology*" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1982, Foreword). Yet in their work and that of other researchers since, the phenomenology of people with learning disabilities has been presented in poignant and moving accounts by those individuals, rather than by the investigators (Atkinson & Williams, 1990; Wyngaarden, 1981; Deacon, 1974). Deacon (1974), a man who was labelled as having learning disabilities, compiled his autobiography with the help of other hospital residents, a testimony to the complexity of meanings given to events, the importance of family and kinship ties and friendship bonds. In the book's introduction Harris comments:

"It shows what can be done. It should also help us to appreciate that those who live in such institutions have a point of view of their own, having feelings and aspirations which not only do they have the right to express but have very often the capability of so doing if they have a fair chance... Anything that will encourage us to listen with proper humility is worthwhile."

The work of anthropologist Edgerton in the 1960s based on observation, intimate conversations and frequent personal contact with participants, provided rich and detailed portraits of individual's lives

following the impact of the US deinstitutionalisation policy. Although it has since been criticised for its basis in the sociology of deviancy (Bogdan & Taylor, 1982), this intensive research has become a powerful legacy for researchers in this field. Wyngaarden (1981) comments that people had rarely been asked about their satisfaction with their day and residential placements:

"One of the most important findings of the study was that mentally retarded people can and are eager to provide complex and moving accounts of their experiences in returning to community life."
(page 112)

More recently new models of participative or 'emancipatory research' have emerged, exemplified by People First's evaluation of the changes for people leaving long stay hospitals to live in the community (People First, 1994). Atkinson and Williams (1990, p241) compiled an anthology of words, pictures, photographs and poems contributed entirely by people with learning disabilities which they argued *"confirms, in its range and richness, that people with learning difficulties do have stories to tell and welcome the opportunity to do so."*

In respect to the issue of employment, Gerke (1992) interviewed people with learning disabilities using less directive methods. Those who responded to her survey held clear visions of an 'ideal job':

"the ability to dream about tomorrow's possibilities should never be underestimated for people who happen to be disabled. If anything some individuals have clearly known what they want for years. It's just that no one ever asked them before."
(pages 238-9)

The importance of attempting to understand the perspectives of people with learning disabilities is therefore firmly recognised in research. However, as a recent study of employment policy concluded, people with disabilities often have no voice in the research projects which concern them (Barnes et al, 1998).

(3)Quality of Life

That people with disabilities should be fully involved in research studies about their lives is further advanced by the work of the quality of life movement (Goode, 1994, 1989, 1988; Felce & Perry, 1993). The significance of the concept of quality of life to studies of supported employment has been discussed in chapter 1 and 3. Accepting that it is an important concept, still leaves the difficult issue of how to measure quality of life however. A respectable body of social and psychological research knowledge exists which is based upon the measure of objective and subjective indicators of quality of life, and a number of scales, including self-rated quality of life scales exist (Cummins, 1997). Some authors claim that quality of life can be measured in terms of objective social indicators reflecting societal standards or norms, needs or welfare. There is an equally significant body of researchers who advocate measuring quality of life primarily in subjective terms as life satisfaction for instance. More

recently new discourses on disability underline the importance of adopting a rights-based approach to defining the indicators or standards of quality of life as "*setting the parameters for conceiving the possible - conceiving what the lives of persons labelled intellectually disabled should entail*" (Bach, 1994, p129). Despite the heterogeneity of perspectives, it is generally agreed that 'quality of life' has proven to be a useful conceptual framework for considering the effectiveness of the supports and services people with learning disabilities receive (Goode, 1994, 1989, 1988).

In the initial stages of formulating the research proposal O'Brien's five accomplishments framework referred to earlier, was used to help direct the research focus onto what was most important from a normalisation perspective, and examining how well supported employment services implemented the five accomplishments. While this framework influenced the design of interview schedules at the start, subsequent research measures had to be open to change on the basis of emerging themes from the data, and what people interviewed thought was important.

A common approach to measurement is to construe quality of life as comprising a series of components, including both objective and subjective indicators (Schalock, 1994; Rosen, Simon & McKinsey, 1994; Taylor, 1994). An immediate problem however in using an indicators approach is to decide what aspects should be measured, what weight should be given to different indicators, and by whom. The practice of calculating an overall quality of life score from answers given to questionnaire-based interview schedules, even when they seek to capture an interviewee's own perception has been criticised recently (Antaki & Rapley, 1996; Rapley & Antaki, 1995). Using insights from conversational analysis, these authors found distortion of the questions and answers posed problems in drawing reliable conclusions from the aggregation of recorded responses. Their work supports the perspective that the research interview is a distinct social interaction that is affected by the relationship between interviewer and interviewee (Barnes, 1994). Further it was taken as an argument for adopting a more unstructured method for collecting data to understand the subjective experiences of people with learning disabilities and the quality of their lives.

The concept of quality of life was utilised to explore the meanings and values individuals attach to their lives, and using qualitative research methods I have explored rather than produced a judgment about quality of life. The strategy adopted was to aim for a combination of data collection through a standardised measure, qualitative interviewing and observation notes. The measure of vocational integration forced specific counting of desirable work-related outcomes as a function of the worksite, while the qualitative data allowed exploration of the subjective meanings. A number of standardised measures were initially considered, including the Rehabilitation Questionnaire (Brown & Bayer, 1992), The Life Experience Checklist (Ager 1993; 1990) and the Quality of Life Questionnaire (Schalock & Keith, 1993; 1989). Although such measures certainly influenced the design of the research schedules subsequently developed, they were not used as the research measures in the study.

The importance of recognising the value of each individual, the holistic nature of quality of life, the plurality and relativity of value frameworks and variables, and the need to take account of the past, present and future dictated that a flexible approach was adopted (Goode, 1988; Robertson, 1982).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research sought to answer a broad range of questions related to the study aims discussed at the beginning of the chapter. Empirical data would be collected about the process and outcomes of supported employment. At the same time I was interested in making comparisons and contrasts between individuals in terms of what they expected, the service they received, and how they perceived the outcomes. In short, six broad questions were addressed:

1. What impact does supported employment have on the lives of individual people with learning disabilities?
2. Are there any differences between projects offering supported employment?
3. Is supported employment helping people with learning disabilities to achieve their goals and aspirations?
4. What kinds of outcomes are achieved by supported employment?
5. Are job outcomes affected in any way by the organisation and delivery of supported employment services?
6. Is it helpful to use qualitative approaches to explore the meaning of supported employment?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study design was essentially qualitative. This was decided upon as the most appropriate methodology for the aims and research questions to be addressed. As such, it stands in contrast to the vast body of supported employment research that comes mainly from a quantitative and behavioural psychology tradition. Reasons for choosing qualitative methodology for this study are supported by Felske (1994, p185) describing the purpose of qualitative research in the following terms:

"The study of socially meaningful or purposeful social action...(qualitative research) strives for empathetic understanding: how people feel, create meaning and their reasons or motivations...accepts that there are many realities and researchers embrace a variety of approaches: hermeneutics or ethnomethodological or phenomenological examinations of peoples' experiences."

The design also incorporated a number of key ingredients: namely that it focused on individuals, the processes of supported employment, was longitudinal, comparative, and used triangulation to add rigour to the investigation.

Individual Focus

Basically, the study set out to focus on the experiences of a target group of 18 individuals, that is, six each from three supported employment projects. The relatively small sample size allowed me to examine the perceptions, views and experiences of individuals in some depth. It was also to a degree dictated by the fact that the study was conducted on a part-time basis.

Process-Focus

It was fundamental to understand something about the processes of supported employment that were operating in the three projects. The design therefore, included methods for gathering data about the processes, operation, management, philosophy and the 'feel' of each project to create background information in which to root the experiences of 18 individuals. In this way, organisational and individual histories could be compared and reflected upon.

Longitudinal

A 'before and after' snapshot or a longitudinal perspective was adopted. Although this was not evaluation research, a method had to be devised to examine change which would place the outcomes of supported employment in the context of people's lives overall. One way to achieve this seemed to be through adopting a longitudinal strategy. Data was therefore collected before supported employment started from the point at which an individual had been offered a job, and at a later point which was around 9-10 months after the initial interview.

Bilken and Moseley (1988), reviewing qualitative methods in the study of people with severe handicaps, concluded that qualitative guidelines hold up well because of their flexibility, but the emphasis on language is a problem especially in respect of people with little or no verbal communication. Another reason for planning an extended fieldwork period was to incorporate time for rapport-building and getting to know individuals before interviewing them. Again there were practical limits on the time available as previously acknowledged, but generally the fieldwork lasted over two years.

Comparative

The study was comparative, in that it compared the experiences of both individuals and different approaches to supported employment. Three projects were selected as research sites primarily on the basis of the contrasting features they presented: for example, two were voluntary and one was a statutory sector project; they were of differing size; each served different populations; they emphasised different aspects of the model; and each offered a variety of service options. Several other differences

and similarities emerged, especially in relation to operational definitions of supported employment and typical processes and these are discussed expansively in the next chapter.

The decision about research sites had also to be governed by pragmatic considerations such as the time it would take to meet with and interview 18 individuals in different parts of Scotland. In addition, time had to be planned to observe the operation of the projects. Issues relating to the limitations of the methodology specifically in terms of site selection and sampling technique, are discussed in chapter 10.

Triangulation

The design incorporated the notion of data triangulation. By this is meant that the methods included observation, documentary analysis, intensive interviews, questionnaires and standardised measures and also in that it gathered views from a range of participants - (a) people with learning disabilities; (b) relatives or carers; and (c) supported employment staff. A number of different theoretical perspectives, as discussed in this and earlier chapters, were also utilised to interpret the data.

Interviews can be subject to deception, exaggeration and distortion, and what people say they do and what they actually do can differ (Deutscher, 1973). The potential for misunderstanding and miscommunication between interviewer and interviewee, and a willingness to talk about certain subjects and not others, can affect the outcome of the interview encounter significantly. Clearly, to base a study solely on interviews runs the risk of being unreliable. Data, and methodological triangulation was introduced to anticipate and mitigate such challenges.

RESEARCH METHODS

Four main research methods were used: (1) intensive interviews; (2) observation; (3) documentary analysis; and (4) a standard measure of vocational integration. An initial postal questionnaire was also sent to projects to gather basic factual data. The paragraphs below describe each in turn. Table 1 summarises the fieldwork undertaken and shows the longitudinal aspect of the design. All of the initial measures were piloted in two employment projects, a supported employment project and an employment project based along more traditional lines. This procedure was to test the efficacy of semi-structured interviews with people with learning disabilities, and also provided helpful insights into the practical operation of a supported employment service, and improved ideas on the most effective ways to observe and record processes.

Table 1: Summary of Research Design

	PILOT	PRE-	POST-	TOTAL
<u>METHOD</u>				
INTERVIEWS:				
- Project Managers	2	4	-	6
- Supported Employees	5	18	14	37
- Parents/Carers	-	16	11	27
- Project Workers	3	18	13	34
Total No. Of Interviews	10	56	38	104
OBSERVATION (Number of Hours)	3	105 (approx. 35 hours Per project)		108
POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE (Sent to Projects)	2	3	-	5
DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS	Leaflets, promotional literature, staff meeting minutes, data collection forms (referral, vocational profile forms etc)			
VOCATIONAL INTEGRATION INDEX (VII)	2	-	11	13

Sample Selection

The criteria for inclusion for supported employment services in the study were that (1) the service was described as a 'supported employment service'; (2) significant contrasts existed between projects; (3) for practical reasons, the geographical distance from my home city was no more than 70 miles; and (4) they were willing to participate in the research study. Naturally this narrowed the field for selection, but the projects included were illustrative of different ways supported employment is typically organised. Also, as there were only six such projects identified across Scotland (Lister et al, 1992) at the start of the study, a sample comprising three research sites seemed respectable. The sample was thus best termed as 'purposive' in that it met the purpose of including a range of approaches to providing supported employment and individuals, rather than adopting a more theoretical sampling technique.

A protracted process of fieldwork in two projects led to uneven numbers of participants from the three projects, even though the aim had been to include six individuals from each. Such issues were not foreseen but proved to be major obstacles in the conduct of the research and the expected time-scale.

Although mechanisms had been established at the start with each project for receiving information about individuals who had been, or were about to be, offered jobs, these links did not always operate smoothly. Pressures of work, sickness absences, coupled with my presence in the projects on a part-time basis, all impacted on the process. By attending staff meetings and building rapport with project staff I had attempted to counter any difficulties in communication, but other factors such as discrepancies about what was meant by a 'job', and the diversity of approaches to supported employment created unique and unavoidable difficulties, particularly with Project 3. Some of these problems arose because the study had not adopted a strict theoretical definition of supported employment at the start to guide the selection of research sites, primarily because its interpretation was of interest in the research. Also, some staff in the projects clearly attached little importance to the research, while others were conscientious, regularly kept in contact and passed information on. It is always impossible to control for such variables. With hindsight however, had I anticipated these issues might cause such problems, I might have planned more time immersed in the projects.

(1) Intensive Interviews

Intensive interviews with a range of participants furnished the bulk of the data. They were designed to gather information from individuals with learning disabilities, those who cared for them (relatives or carers), and from supported employment staff, primarily about the quality of life and outcomes of supported employment, but also to find out about the projects themselves. Data triangulation allowed a comprehensive picture to be created for each individual, particularly about individual social support networks.

The planned sequence of interviews started with supported employment staff, followed by an interview with the individual, and lastly with relatives or carers. There were two practical reasons for this: part of the information sought from job coaches was advice for communicating with individuals with limited speech or other communication difficulties. In the event, there was no-one recruited into the sample who had any difficulties with verbal communication. Secondly, as the nature of the process of supported employment should involve information gathering about an individual's background, circumstances, aspirations and employment goals, as well as their social networks, an assumption was made that some information sought for the research would be readily available from existing sources.

With the permission of individual interviewees, all interviews with people with learning disabilities, carers, and project managers were tape recorded and later, transcribed in full, thus ensuring as natural an interaction as possible during the actual interview and also increasing the reliability of data recording. Copies of all interview schedules and topic guides can be found in the appendices.

Question Structure & Reliability of Data

Prior research suggested attention should be given to considerations of the reliability and validity of data obtained from interviews with people with learning disabilities. The literature review highlights a number of obstacles in relation to interviewing people with learning disabilities, studies of response bias, high levels of acquiescence and giving answers which relate to the most recent option being the most common (Sigelman, et al, 1986 1982, 1981, 1980). These studies have been cited since the 1980s more or less uncritically as an indication of the inherent difficulties involved in interviewing people with learning disabilities as they clearly "*coincide with the commonly held view that people with learning difficulties are very suggestible and eager to please.*" (Simons, 1994, p 5).

Simons concluded on the basis of findings from other researchers (e.g. Conroy and Bradley, 1985), who found much lower levels of acquiescence and recency, that the findings illustrate less the function of having a learning disability per se than a coping strategy used by people with little power or experience, and who are unclear about the researcher's role. As Bilken and Moseley (1988) suggest, phenomena such as the wish to please the interviewer may be heightened by institutional experiences and consequently, it is most important that researchers are clear about their identity and purpose in the interview.

In relation to the issue of using open questions in interviews with people with learning disabilities the advice is contradictory. On the one hand, Bilken and Moseley (1988) suggest avoiding open-ended questions and instead using a structured interview approach along with observation. Sigelman et al (1982) found open-ended questions to be unanswerable for many in their sample, nevertheless they were to be preferred to yes-no checklists for validity. Atkinson (1988) comments that open-ended questions are increasingly favoured, over specific or either/or type of questions. Malin (1983) concluded that a less structured interview would encourage informants to speak more freely. In a pilot study, Flynn (1986) found that all her subjects were able to respond to open questions and their views were corroborated by their social workers. This confirmed my own past research experience in this area (Brandon & Ridley, 1983).

Conroy and Bradley (1985) concluded that asking questions in several ways and in different formats is an important strategy. A similar conclusion is reached by Sigelman et al (1982; 1980) conducting a series of studies exploring the validity of answers given to researchers. Particularly effective were pictorial multiple-choice questions that increased responsiveness without lowering agreement across data sources, or generating systematic response biases (Sigelman et al, 1982). In support of incorporating diagrammatic or photographic techniques into question formats, Sigelman concluded that drawings enabled more individuals to respond (Sigelman & Budd, 1986).

Interviews with Project Managers

The first set of interviews took place in 1995 with project managers. All were tape recorded and transcribed in full. Each interview lasted approximately one and a half hours, yielding around 35-45 page transcripts per manager. As the project I will later call Project 3 had a Director and Deputy Director who both wanted to be interviewed, two manager interviews were undertaken for that project, covering much the same ground. The interviews were semi-structured driven only by a topic list. Interviews were along conversational lines but the same information was sought from each. In short, the interview covered:

- * history and genesis of the project
- * programme content and emphases
- * key values and philosophy
- * definition of supported employment
- * service options
- * expected outcomes
- * management arrangements
- * support for autonomy, choice and rights
- * measures of quality

A brief postal questionnaire was sent out to managers just prior to arranging a face-to-face interview, so that interview time could be focused on exploring more philosophical issues and the meaning attached to terms like 'real jobs' and 'supported employment' in greater depth. The interview thus presented an opportunity to clarify information given in the questionnaire which was unclear from the completed returns. Information sought by questionnaire included such items as the project's target population; the time the project had been in operation; referral and funding sources; number of staff, their background and qualifications; average number of users to employment worker, profile of service users; the jobs supported such as whether they were full or part-time and the kinds of jobs found; and information about jobs losses in the previous year.

Interviews with Individuals with Learning Disabilities

The research design allowed some time to be spent building rapport with individuals with learning disabilities before undertaking an intensive interview. This was facilitated by introductions at the first meeting by someone known to the person, and meeting people in informal settings such as at home, going for a coffee or meal, or meeting them at a day centre. On these visits it was necessary to find out something about what was important to them, what they liked and the people involved with them, and I

made a point of taking an interest in photographs of relatives or talking about special possessions like a thimble collection, model train set or record collection, to elicit friendly conversation.

The place where interviews were conducted was normally the person's own home, unless they specified another more suitable venue. At the beginning of each interview I gave an outline of the purpose of the research and why he/she had been asked to participate, explained my role as a student researcher, and gave assurances regarding confidentiality of information and made sure the person knew that he/she was free to stop the interview at any time. Additionally, as I was being invited into peoples' homes to share their time I felt it was important to behave as a guest, and I always took a small gift of flowers, a cake or something similar.

Interviews were arranged with each of 18 individuals before the supported employment job started and around 9-10 months later. The justification for taking a longitudinal perspective has already been discussed. On the basis of other researchers' experience I also anticipated difficulties asking people with learning disabilities about retrospective events and feelings, rather than inquiring about such events in the present (Booth et al, 1990).

Basic data was collected initially such as, living situation, sex, age, details of day centre or other occupation, details of the prospective employer and the job secured. Consumer interviews were largely unstructured but guided by a topic list so that the same information was collected consistently across the whole sample. The main emphasis during interviews was on the illumination of feelings and perceptions of the experience of supported employment, and ultimately how initial expectations compared with the outcomes. With individuals' permission, interviews were tape recorded and transcribed in full. The maximum interview length was around one-and-a-half hours. Interview transcripts were between 25 to 50 pages in length, depending on how effusive or quiet the individual had been.

Eight main topics were covered during the first stage interviews as follows:

1. Expectations of having a job
2. 'Dream job'
3. Current occupation & satisfaction
4. Perceptions and understanding of supported employment
5. Choice
6. Social support network
7. Some autobiographical details
8. Life satisfaction

From this baseline, information changes could be explored, making reference to expected outcomes as compared to the actual outcomes of supported employment. Social integration was a major concept for this research but it was always going to be difficult to measure. However, it was likely that evidence might be found of increased participation in community activities, of new friendships particularly those with non-disabled people both at work and outside of work, and in reported increases in life satisfaction. The degree of individuals' satisfaction with their social life before and after supported employment, had also been recorded.

Two interview schedules were drawn up for the second stage interviews, one that was used with individuals still in their original job, and the second for use with those who had lost jobs. The data collection followed similar topic lines to the first stage interviews, but also focused more closely on the experience of the job, the outcomes or changes resulting from having a job and their aspirations for the future. Where a job had ended, the person's feelings about that event, and the reasons they gave for job loss were explored.

Second stage interviews involved crosschecking reported outcomes, with the expectations identified during the first stage. 14 separate statements in response to the question 'what is important about having a job' were identified at the first-stage interviews. In order to be able to cross-reference the first and second-stage interviews, individuals were asked which of the 14 statements best described their experience of employment, and to identify any missing ones as well. This goal was achieved by translating the statements into a photographic and word picture. Each photograph, featured either a male or female model, corresponded with a word concept, for example, 'money - "a good wage"' was represented by an open hand with money in its palm, and 'meeting people at work' showed either the male or female model interacting with other people in a tea-room or similar. The photographs were mounted on card and laminated. The series of pictures with the female model were used in interviews with female interviewees, and the male model with male interviewees. During each interview the individual was asked to browse through the pictures and select those images that seemed relevant to his or her experience, which were then discussed. They were also asked to select the one image that showed what was most important about having a job.

Interviews with Carers

Permission was obtained from each individual to interview the person(s) whom they identified as their main carer(s). Carers were defined as relatives, such as parents or spouse, or paid staff in a residential setting who knew the person well. Interviews with carers were designed to mirror the interviews with supported employees in gathering information about the person, not the carers' situation specifically. They were intended to gather supplementary information around the same topics, but in addition, I had wanted to contrast individuals' opinions and perceptions of events with those of carers.

The interviews were informal but conducted using a research schedule to guide the collection of information. Interviews with carers lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours, and sometimes were with both parents if this was feasible. Carers' views were sought at the pre-employment stage on seven main topics:

1. Expected outcomes of having a job
2. Perceptions and understanding of supported employment
3. Carer's assessment of individual's skills
4. Individual's social support network
5. Individual's self perception and self esteem
6. Choice
7. Brief biographical details

Sixteen carers were interviewed at the first-stage interviews. Eight interviews were undertaken with parents (invariably mothers, but sometimes both parents together), seven with nominated keyworkers, and one with a spouse. In the case of the spouse carer, interviews were arranged with both husband (interviewee) and wife (carer) together.

The majority of carers (4 out of 5) interviewed in respect of people from Project 3 were keyworkers because the majority of the sample from this project lived in residential settings. In contrast, the majority of carers for individuals from Projects 1 and 2 were parents (3 out of 6; and 5 out of 7 respectively). Across such a range it was inevitable that the quality of information obtained would vary considerably. Parent carers and spouses, who had known the person for all, or a significant part of their lives, spoke with greater knowledge and in greater depth than someone who had only been an individual's keyworker for a short time. Two of the 18 individuals did not wish any nominated carers to be interviewed, basically because of difficulties in the relationship.

The second stage interviews with carers invariably took place after the interviews with supported employees. They were to provide a measure of carers' opinions and perceptions of the experience of supported employment, including their satisfaction with the process and outcomes, and to compare with what carers had predicted would be the outcomes, provide supplementary information on changes in the person's social support network, and finally, to record carers' hopes and aspirations for the individual's future. In those cases where the job had ended before the post-employment interview, supplementary questions were asked to explore how carers had interpreted this event. A written list of eleven expected outcomes had been identified at the first stage, and this was used in the form of a typed word list, as a reference point when asking carers to identify actual outcomes.

Interviews with Project Staff

Interviews with project staff were undertaken at both stages. The choice of which staff member to interview was usually made by the project on the basis of the staff member's involvement with the individual. Although these interviews were primarily to gather supplementary data around individuals in the sample, I was also interested in opinions held by staff about supported employment and their interpretation of events such as individual job loss. A semi-structured questionnaire was drawn up to collect specific information, and to gather opinions that covered a range of areas. The following information in relation to each individual in the sample was sought from supported employment staff:

- * Definition of supported employment
- * Individual characteristics and skills
- * Strategies for finding suitable jobs for this individual
- * Strategies for involving the individual and carers
- * Details of the proposed job
- * Expected outcomes
- * Financial information
- * Details of support to be provided
- * Individual's social support network

Data collection methods assumed that the process of supported employment necessitated gathering personal information from the individual, carer and other professionals involved with the person. It was taken for granted that a detailed picture of employment objectives and aspirations, and background information about social support networks would be readily available. This assumption proved mistaken for reasons that are discussed in the next chapter. The scope and quality of data varied hugely between staff members, and between projects. For reasons that will be discussed in chapter 5, Project 3 did not undertake vocational profiles and its staff were generally poorly informed of individuals' networks of support and social participation. Even where a vocational profile existed it did not necessarily focus on the individual's social support network in any depth.

As with other participants, a second interview was undertaken with supported employment staff nine to ten months after the first interview. It was the intention that the interview would be with the same staff member. However, this was not always possible as different staff were working with the individual at the time of the second-stage interviews. The purpose of second interviews was primarily to examine the outcomes of supported employment for the individual against earlier expectations and to reflect on the process for the individual. A list of outcomes that had been identified by staff at the first-stage interviews was used at the second-stage as a prompt. However, changes in personnel somewhat

compounded the success of this exercise, in that previous responses were not always readily understood and had to be explained.

The second-stage interview measure had sought to capture information around the following areas:

- * Job and employer information
- * The nature of job support
- * Job match
- * Challenges
- * Outcomes
- * Future career planning

Once again if a job had been lost or the person had left, supplementary questions were asked about the reasons and the lessons that had been learned from the experience for future job matching and placement.

(2) Observation

Observation sessions were undertaken as part of a strategy to describe how the projects delivered a supported employment service. Particular attention was paid to the advice of Emerson et al (1995) in writing up fieldnotes in ethnography: notes focused on recording and discussing indigenous meanings and concerns of the people in the setting; that is, meanings that supported employment staff gave to concepts like a 'real job', and secondly to recording details of the social and interactional processes that I observed.

The settings observed included both individual and group activities that happened in each of the projects. Although fieldnotes did not involve completing a strict schedule, a checklist was prepared for consistency of information collation across the projects, and this was drawn up with reference to items in the evaluation tool PASSING (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1982), and frameworks for evaluating institutional regimes (Booth et al, 1990: Booth, 1985).

The approach at times involved participant observation as it meant taking part in groups. As a participant I was able to more closely observe interactions between staff and people with learning disabilities, and the different types of individual and group session on offer. This was particularly relevant in Project 3 that offered several group sessions at its in-centre base. At other times 'observation' meant visiting different office bases and conducting unstructured conversations with staff and service users.

Most of the field notes were written up away from the observation setting, although some brief notes were occasionally taken during group sessions. In accordance with established good practice in ethnography, I endeavoured to write up the field notes on the same day as I was in the setting. However, this was not always practicable and on a couple of occasions I resorted to simply recording key words and themes until more detailed notes could be written up. Copies of staff meeting minutes were also obtained. For each project the following information was recorded systematically:

- * Time spent in observation at site
- * Impressions of physical features, including location and accessibility, office layout
- * 'Feel' of the project
- * Services offered
- * Processes such as vocational profile, job finding, job match
- * Emphases & values

For each project I observed a 'week in the life of' (that is, Monday to Friday) by spending one day per week in each project over a five week period. Thus three days a week for five consecutive weeks, were spent observing the supported employment projects. Observation notes were also recorded at additional times such as when visiting the project to interview staff or users, and in the initial stages of familiarising with the project staff.

It soon transpired that observing 'supported employment' was far from straight forward, given that much of the support and staff:user interactions, occur on-site at workplaces. The original research design had planned workplace observations, but as the study developed I became more sensitive to the practical and ethical issues involved in observing supported employees at work, and after discussion with academic supervisors, decided against it.

(3) Documentary Analysis

Written documentation including annual reports, promotional leaflets, information for prospective users and employers and so on was requested from the three projects. Documents were examined for 'clues' about service approaches, philosophy and emphases. For example, I was interested in the messages projects communicated to others about what they offered, and how this was represented through use of logos, form, language and style. Although the measures of Wolfensberger and Thomas (1982) PASSING and PASS were not used, the theory behind exploring imagery and unconscious elements within services was influential.

(4) Measure of Vocational Integration

Integration is repeatedly identified as a critical success factor for supported employment (Hughes et al, 1998; Parent et al, 1992; Storey & Langyel, 1992). Whether an individual is truly integrated at work is a challenging question to answer. In addition to gathering qualitative information about how individuals felt about their co-workers and the social opportunities afforded by their jobs, a standardised measure of vocational integration was used to assess the integration potential of jobs with some consistency. A number of different measures exist: some comparing opportunities for mixing with other people at work and the company's normal employee benefits, procedures etc. with those experienced by a supported employee in the same company (e.g. Parent et al, 1992; Lagomarcino, 1989); others assessing interactions with co-workers (e.g. McNair & Rusch, 1989).

The measure chosen was the Vocational Integration Index or VII as devised by the Virginia Commonwealth University (Parent et al, 1992b). Permission to use the VII was obtained by letter from the authors, prior to starting the research. The strengths of the VII were that it could reliably identify specific areas of strength or weakness for a specific job or consumer, and it had been validated for use in a variety of employment situations. It had been extensively field-tested through an expert panel review to prepare an initial draft of the instrument, pilot study, and a formal validation study to assess validity and reliability.

Project staff were requested to complete the VII for individuals in jobs just prior to the second stage interviews. The VII is an assessment instrument used by employment specialists to monitor individuals' levels of social integration, being primarily designed as a tool to help detect any problems and improve vocational integration opportunities for individuals. It was also intended for use by managers, supervisors, and policymakers to assess placement and service quality.

The VII is divided into two specific scales: a job scale and a consumer scale. Both have to be completed. The job scale contains 32 items organised into four sections: company indicators; work area indicators; employee indicators; and benefit indicators. Company indicators measure formal or informal supports encapsulated in operational policies, procedures, personnel policies, sponsored activities, physical features and general employee supports. Work area indicators refer to features of particular work areas, such as staffing patterns, work schedules, physical environment, supervision, departmental policies, and lunch/break activities. Employee indicators focus on workdays and activities of employees including the amount of social interaction during work and recognition of personal events. A general description is given of the social characteristics of the job site and the way employees generally participate in those events. Finally, benefit indicators focus on the monetary and non-monetary benefits available to employees such as wages, raises, medical benefits, vacation time, opportunities for advancement etc.

Each of the 32 items has five response choices, which vary according to the item, and the employment specialist is asked to circle the most appropriate one. For example, the job scale asks 'Are the majority of persons employed by the company not handicapped?' and offers the following options: no employees have a disability; one employee has a disability (not including the consumer); more than one employee has a disability (most or all work in different locations within the company); more than one employee has a disability (most or all work together in a group); all employees have a disability or there are no other employees. A similar question on the consumer scale mirrors this - 'Does the consumer work with co-workers who are not handicapped?'

As a complement, the consumer scale assesses the level of integration experienced by the supported employee in that work setting, using the 32 corresponding items organised into the same four domains, and with five response choices. The job scale and consumer scale both provide scores for each of the four domains: company indicators, work area indicators; employee indicators; and benefit indicators. These are illustrated graphically on the form to allow for visual comparison. Copies of these scales are contained in the appendices.

The VII was completed for 11 individuals in total: five from Project 1; three from Project 2; and three from Project 3. The results are discussed in chapter 9.

DATA ANALYSIS

The product of qualitative research has been described as a 'bricolage', representing the researcher's images, understandings and interpretations of the phenomenon under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Such description seemed extremely apt. This study after all, does not claim to be the voice of people with learning disabilities, though it attempts to apply rigour and depth of analysis so that the end product is as faithful to the original meanings of the informants as possible. Nor is it written from a supported employment professional's perspective. What I hope to achieve through this research can be encapsulated in the following quotation:

"The product ...is a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage like creature that represents the researcher's images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis."
(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p 3)

As the bulk of data came from sets of unstructured interviews with a range of interviewees, the goal was to analyse different perceptions and to set these in the context of documentary and observational evidence and the professional literature on supported employment. All interviews, except those with employment staff, were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. During the fieldwork period whilst transcribing interview data and writing up observation notes, concepts were logged, creating the initial

foundation for possible lines of analysis and interpretation. A not wholly successful attempt was made to record personal impressions and feelings, although it proved difficult to decide how best to make use of this data.

Analysis was based on both pre-determined concepts and ideas from the literature as in chapters 1-3, and a process of induction by developing themes and categories from the data, looking for patterns and making general discoveries about phenomena. In developing an analytical framework, reference was made to a number of texts on qualitative data analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Bryman and Burgess, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Silverman, 1993; Dey, 1993; Strauss and Corbin 1990).

At the start of the study I was aware that existing supported employment research had established the benefits of supported employment beyond question. However, researchers were also increasingly highlighting challenging findings around social integration and the quality of other outcomes (Mank, 1994). I set out therefore with an ambitious goal to apply methods of qualitative data analysis to try to unpack some of the taken-for-granted concepts within the supported employment field, and thus to generate new information about their meaning from the little-known perspective of people with learning disabilities.

A computerised package for coding and retrieving segments of the data, The Ethnograph (Windows V5 Beta), was used to aid processing huge quantities of unstructured data. The coding procedures of The Ethnograph facilitated the process of identifying, naming interesting things in the data, whilst searching for coded segments allowed closer examination and comparison and contrast of ideas from the data.

CHAPTER 5:

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SETTINGS: VARIATION ON A THEME

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter three different and contrasting approaches to providing a supported employment service are compared, and the potential impact on the people experiencing the service is examined briefly. Taking account of the social environment of the programmes was considered an essential component of the research, even though measurement scales and literature that exists have been developed largely in relation to institutional regimes (Booth et al, 1990, 1985; Moos, 1974; King et al, 1971; Goffman, 1961). Wolfensberger's principle of normalisation identified the effects of social expectations of disability and with Thomas (1983), he developed a means of measuring the service environment in Program Analysis of Service Systems Implementation of Normalisation Goals (PASSING). With reference to this literature, I attempted to collect comparable information about the physical settings, organisational structures, characteristics of the staff and the 'feel' of each of the three supported employment projects through a semi-structured observation sheet and a questionnaire which managers were asked to complete.

The project portraits presented below illustrate that, whilst there are undoubtedly common features of supported employment programmes, it is possible to place the emphasis on different aspects, to have differing operational definitions, and for the structures and service options to vary considerably. From a common baseline definition of supported employment, the concepts of a 'real job', 'support' and 'local employers' were variously interpreted. The effect was to create services with common features that looked and felt very different. The importance of exploring such contrasts, especially as they are rarely explored in depth in the supported employment literature, was to provide a backcloth to the analysis of individual outcomes presented in chapters 6-9.

This chapter is organised into four main sections: a background description of the projects provides first a brief pen picture, drawing attention to any significant physical or historical features. Next, the predominant emphases are explored and contrasted. This is followed by a discussion of the interpretation, meaning and definition of supported employment. Four core features were identified and probed more closely. Finally, the process of supported employment was investigated as typically experienced by users of each project, and compared to supported employment processes identified by other writers. To keep the identities of the services participating in the study confidential, I refer to them throughout the text as Project 1, Project 2 and Project 3.

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECTS

The following descriptions of each project included in the study are intended to set the scene for the rest of the chapter.

Project 1

Project 1 was a voluntary organisation funded through the government's then Urban Aid Programme, which had been set up to provide individual job support to people with learning disabilities. Its aims were succinctly summarised in the Annual Assessment for 1994 as *"to secure employment for adults with learning disabilities through the development of an employment support service. The objectives are to provide a job coaching scheme linked to a drop-in facility."* Funding and accountability were in the hands of a major charitable organisation, which also provided supported accommodation and other support to people living in the community. Project 1 served as a pilot for a citywide supported employment project developed by this organisation and funded through a hospital resettlement programme. The general catchment area of approximately 10,000 people was disproportionately affected by high unemployment and poverty, being an identified urban area of multiple deprivations under the government Urban Aid Programme (now known as Priority Partnership Areas or PPAs).

Originally in 1992, Project 1 started from a local college campus, but was soon relocated in 1993 to *"more suitable"* premises in a business unit on an industrial estate. Adjacent units were occupied by private businesses. The business orientation of the project was therefore positively reflected in its location, although the manager identified that the High Street would be their ideal location:

"Ideally we should be in the High Street as a recruitment service for anyone, but one that happens to supply a service for people with disabilities. That's how we would like to evolve."

People who used the service were referred to as 'clients', not 'candidates' as is common terminology used by recruitment agencies. A professional window sign served to identify the project's name and hint at its being about job recruitment, but not explicitly identifying that it was for people with learning disabilities. In at least two respects, the project was physically accessible: the office was physically located in ground floor accommodation; and it was near local bus stops and had parking facilities.

The office itself was modern and open-plan, with partitions creating two small rooms for a manager's office and an interview room. It served as a base for staff to work from where they undertook related administrative tasks, made telephone calls, held staff and other meetings, and as a drop-in centre for existing and potential clients. The informational wall posters and notice board, and a corner of the office that was more informally furnished with soft chairs indicated the drop-in aspect of the project. Shared staff and client amenities such as the drink-making facilities and toilet, reflected in a physical sense something of the strong normalization ethos of this project.

Project 2

Project 2 was a local authority employment project managed by the social work department. Its aim was to find and keep, employment opportunities for a broadly defined range of people - people with physical disabilities, people with mental illness, and people with learning disabilities. The project had developed over ten years, from its beginnings solely as a sponsor for the Department of Employment's Sheltered Placement Scheme, to a service that now afforded opportunities for a range of social work clients to find and sustain employment. There were strong links with the personnel department through a designated equal opportunities officer, who worked closely with the project and attended team meetings.

Funding came from the local authority, the Department of Employment towards the Supported Employment Programme (SEP), and the Scottish Office for an Urban Aid-funded sub-project employing three workers to find employment opportunities for "*individuals who by the nature of their disability do not receive a service from the statutory Employment Services*".

The manager of Project 2 described it as providing an umbrella or spectrum of employment services, encompassing job hunt, work experience, and individual job support. The Project provided support to part-time jobs, and to job positions secured under the Supported Employment Programme (SEP). The jobs were both with local employers and in a sheltered employment factory run by the social work department and employing up to 40 people. Eligibility for SEP is based upon an individual producing between 30-80% of normal performance in a job task. This ratio is negotiated between the sponsor (in this case, the local authority) and the host (the employer). In Project 2 individuals became employees of the local authority, with a negotiated percentage of their wages paid by the private employer. Staff separated out tasks to do with the SEP and supporting part-time jobs. Some staff worked solely in the factory setting. Staff frequently referred to the part-time job option as the "*wee supported employment*".

Although Project 2 had been in existence before then, it was in 1993 that the model of 'supported employment' had begun to influence thinking about the way the whole service operated. As a consequence, at the point at which I studied the Project, it consisted of these different options that were reflected in differentiated staff functions. Separate staff meetings were held and staff operated within defined geographical areas.

Users of the project were referred to as 'clients', a term common in social work. Many would already be known to social work, as priority was given to referrals from social work clients, for example, people who attended day centres, had a social worker or care manager. The catchment area for Project

2 covered both urban and rural areas, and comprised a general population of some 300,000 people corresponding to the local authority area. As a consequence of the geographical spread and the genesis of the project described above, there was not one but several bases from which it operated, coordinated by a manager at the social work headquarters base. All of the locations were in buildings associated with social care services. One was at social work headquarters, another consisted of a room in a housing association drop-in centre, and a third was based at the factory workshop. Staff also occasionally used the network of adult day centres and local higher-education colleges available on a more infrequent basis. An employment project organised by a day centre linked with the team, as did a local college that aimed to ensure transition from college to work.

Project sites functioned primarily as bases for staff. They were therefore furnished as offices with desks and other office equipment, and not as drop-in centres with comfortable seating and informal areas. Although the main base located in Social Work headquarters had disabled access, this was not utilised as an accessible feature of the project for the reasons described above. Despite these different locations it could not be described as local, or necessarily easy to reach for the catchment population, given the size of the population it covered.

Project 3

Parents of people with physical disabilities originally set up Project 3 in 1981, to find employment opportunities for their sons and daughters. The current service started in 1989, when the voluntary organisation was commissioned by the local authority to provide employment opportunities specifically for people with learning disabilities, while the local authority took over day-service provision for people with physical disabilities. It was funded from a variety of sources including the local authority social work department, health board, European Social Fund, Scottish Enterprise and the National Lotteries Charities Board. Geographical catchment for the project was similar to Project 2, and corresponded to the boundaries of the Region prior to the 1996 local government reform.

Pre-vocational training was offered, including Scotvec modules, alongside individual job support in a range of settings. Such a combination was unique to this project. Despite some programmatic changes during my fieldwork, the main elements remained essentially unchanged. About the programme, the manager commented, "*you are either a day care centre or an employment agency, but we are kind of both*". This duality of purpose was thus perceived by the project as a strength. An offshoot of the service was a sub-project set up specifically to cater for the employment needs of young people aged 16-17 years who it was stated "*needed to mature*". One consequence of combining vocational training and employment support, was that it needed a large group of over twenty staff. Further, it also meant a clear functional division into two distinct staff groups - in-centre and job support staff - with the inherent difficulties and tensions this brought.

Project 3 operated at its inception in 1989 from an old school annex in a densely populated, residential area. It moved eight years later in 1997 to a listed building in the City Centre. The building opposite the school annex was a special school for children with disabilities. Wolfensberger (1972) has documented in detail the counter-productive effects of such negative image juxtapositions. Relocation to a City Centre location dramatically improved the material environment from a shabby, run-down building which was continually vandalised, to a desirable building with high-quality furniture and decor, more in keeping with the nature of the service being provided. Due to its architectural features, the new building was included in the City's Open Doors event. However, as for most of my study, Project 3 operated from the school annex, I have concentrated most comments on the original physical environment.

There was nothing about the external design to suggest to a passer-by that this was an employment service. Externally, the building looked like a primary school. Inside, the primary school design prevailed, with long corridors, large classrooms serving as craft workshop, a technical room, and a student common room. There were separate staff and student rooms, and shared toilets and cafe. Clocking-in apparatus in the corridor sat preserved, if defunct. Staff operated 'class registers' to check attendance. The ambience, suggested both by the building and the operating regime, had more in common with school or college attendance than adult employment. For instance, group meetings were referred to as "classes" and a register of attendance was taken at the beginning of each session. Relationships between users and staff were based on a teacher: student ethos.

The majority of users travelled to the project by bus, with the nearest bus stop for services to and from the city, only a few minutes walk away. However, it should be remembered that the geographical catchment area was considerable, and many users had to catch two or more buses to get there from distant rural areas. There was car parking available in the school grounds. A ramp up to the building promised access to wheelchair users but was rarely used, if at all, as a locked door at the top of the ramp testified.

PROJECTS' PRIORITIES

Emergent variation in the options provided, and the structures of the three projects can be examined in terms of the projects' priorities. This next section looks briefly at this aspect. In short the main emphases or the things that the projects felt were most important were (a) fulfilling individuals' right to have a job, (b) social integration (c) ensuring choice, and (d) an individual or person-centred approach.

(a) A Right To A Job

One of the main emphases, as one might expect of supported employment, was securing jobs for people who had traditionally been excluded from the workforce. Work is part of the fabric of modern society, although the last two decades have witnessed fundamental changes in attitudes to work as has been discussed in chapter 1. Supported employment staff emphasised the right of people with disabilities to participate and contribute alongside others in society. Employment after all was an important goal of normalisation:

"Our purpose is to provide the services and support to the opportunity to work...everyone should have the opportunity to work"

(Project 1)

"Community care should include access to the services and entitlements that everyone has in society, including employment."

(Project 2)

"It's to facilitate...equality through employment and tackling their social and leisure problems"

(Project 3)

Projects 1 and 2 clearly highlight the contribution supported employment can make to tackling structural barriers to employment, while Project 3 highlighted the importance of tackling individual "problems" and changing individuals' behaviour. Further the intrinsic benefits of working, such as job satisfaction, self esteem, self-confidence, status and self-identity as a worker etc. were commonly emphasised over wages.

(b) Social Integration

The potential of supported employment to enhance social participation was emphasised repeatedly, even over wages. Despite this there was ambivalence over whether supported employment could bring about social inclusion in the way the model intended. It was for instance considered impractical in the current economic climate to pick and choose between job-sites on the basis of their integration potential:

"I think it's one of these idealistic ideals...that everyone who works develops all these networks and friendships..(When it does not happen) it is not necessarily the result of discrimination but the work culture...sometimes it is the norm you just get your head down and get on with the grind then leave..."

(Manager, Project 1)

"Sometimes at work they can make a genuine friend, but not the majority, especially people with learning disabilities."

(Project 2 Worker)

Project 2 believed that supported employment could have only a limited impact on social integration, and highlighted a need for others to address peoples' need for friends. Project 3 attempted to address individuals' social needs directly by organising social events and holidays for groups of its students, and through running a social skills training programme in-house. In common with many social service agencies, the overriding emphasis of Project 3 was placed on the achievement of individual's competence, especially developing 'independent living skills'. Getting a job was secondary to that of fostering independence. In essence employment was perceived as *"just one part of the stride towards independence"*.

(c) Choices

Supported employment staff in the projects emphasised the degree of choice that supported employment offered. The key aspects of choice stressed referred to offering more meaningful daytime occupation than adult resource centres, developing career choices and having choice between job options. Individuals could also choose to change to a different job. However, choice was not an easy concept for supported employment, particularly given that many individuals with disabilities had limited work experience generally. Nor was it an easy task to seek the views of people who were rarely asked for their opinions. Time and effort had to be invested to ensure meaningful job choices. The alternative was what the manager of Project 2 called *"an illusion of choice"*, referring to the practice of basing job search and matching activities on limited information. The extent to which individuals using the projects felt they were presented with choices and were in control of their occupational destinies, is further discussed in chapters 7-9 in relation to quality of life considerations and the individual outcomes of supported employment.

(d) Individual/Person-Centred Focus

The individual focus of supported employment services was repeatedly emphasised by staff but as the subsequent discussion of operational practices demonstrates, the new person-centred planning approaches were not yet fully integrated into the model. Person-centred approaches allow the central focus to be on the individual planning his/her future (Sanderson et al, 1997). The more recent literature in relation to supported employment and person-centred planning, suggests that the individual should be involved not only in defining occupational goals but in identifying and contacting employers, securing the job, organising the support strategy and so on (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Callahan & Garner, 1997; Mank, 1996b). Although an individualised focus was emphasised by these services, the ideals found in person-centred planning were underdeveloped.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT DEFINITIONS - THEORY VS PERCEPTIONS

An examination of the differences between projects, in terms of their physical and programmatic qualities and emphases, leads naturally onto an exploration of the interpretation, meaning and definition each brought to the model. Definitions of supported employment have been discussed in chapter 3. The managers of the projects in the study defined it thus:

"A real job for the going rate, in an integrated setting, all training and support provided to the client at the jobsite, using TSI as our main training tool." (Project 1)

"The purpose of supported employment is to secure jobs in business with all the regular outcomes of being employed. We focus on real jobs (i.e. made up of tasks that someone would be paid to do) within going concerns and that pay the appropriate rate for the job" (Project 2)

"Getting people into jobs in the open market, paid employment at the going rate, with supported training." (Project 3)

They agreed on the four key features of supported employment:

1. Paid jobs at the 'going-rate'
2. Individualised support
3. Local or private employers, and
4. The use of Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI) techniques

Each of the four key elements will be examined in turn. However, there are some general comments that need to be made about the definitions adopted. The apparent consensus in definition proved fragile, when set in relation to how this was put into practice. In theory, they were univocal about the meaning of supported employment; in practice they diverged significantly from theory. The comparison was analogous to examining the approaches of three different artists to the same subject matter. Although certain key features would still be recognisable in all three paintings, the emphases on different aspects of the composition would create unique and contrasting results. The three projects agreed with the notion of 'real jobs', but did not all limit this concept to paid employment; they all used TSI, but one project used these techniques to provide social skills training at a special day centre; they all used local or commercial employers, but two projects also offered paid work in a sheltered workshop environment, or secured multiple placements with one employer, regardless of whether or not that meant the number of people with disabilities then exceeded the percentage in the general population.

Some differences had been obvious at the start of the research. In fact early on I had deliberated over whether to include Project 3 in the study, as it provided mainly unpaid placements and vocational

qualification training which seemed at odds with the theory of supported employment. However, it was included in the study in order that the initial ambiguities which seemed to exist in the model could be explored, and to discover the extent to which different projects could be representative of an ideal type of supported employment.

What counts as supported employment in the US was discussed by West et al (1994) who drew attention to the number of reported projects found in national studies which adopted different definitions of supported employment. Similarly, UK studies such as Pozner and Hammond (1993), and Lister et al (1992), have drawn attention to competing definitions in the UK. In fact the use of different definitions makes cross-study comparison difficult. West et al (1994, p 310) concluded that despite an apparent divergence, adherence to certain principles that have defined supported employment from its inception, was the key to moving forward, that is:

“real work for real pay, physical and social integration, targeted for those with the most severe disabilities who would otherwise not have access to integrated employment opportunities.”

None of the Projects were explicitly targeting people with severe disabilities, as was borne out by examining the characteristics of the sample population (see chapter 6); nor did they include a minimum number of working hours in their definitions. They could not agree on whether ‘real jobs’ meant paid jobs, nor if paid jobs in sheltered settings counted as supported employment.

1. Core Feature - ‘Real jobs’

Defining the employment relationship often provokes heated debate amongst employment specialists. ‘Real jobs’ was not an absolute concept. What most people would understand by ‘real job’ or ‘employment’ can be related to the essential characteristics of the employer:employee relationship in capitalist society (Callahan & Garner, 1997). An employee provides the effort and time, and is rewarded with pay by an employer. Moon et al (1990, page 6) highlight why payment for jobs is important, arguing that payment: increases dignity and self esteem, expands levels of discretionary income and improves choice and the degree of control one has over one’s life. In contrast, some project staff did not perceive wages or payment to be a prime consideration of a ‘real job’, on the basis that most supported employees were not earning a living from their employment as a result of the so-called benefits trap (see chapter 2). Professionals’ assumptions and judgment on this matter are contrasted with the views of users in chapter 6, which examines user aspirations and expectations, and chapters 8 & 9 which focus on individual outcomes.

In effect there was slippage in the term ‘real job’. The concept was commonly replaced with that of ‘meaningful jobs’ or ‘worthwhile jobs’, which had many of the same features with the exception of

pay. A 'meaningful job' was defined as one with a local employer, a task which would need to be done by someone for payment or on a voluntary basis. Thus voluntary work, and unpaid placements with private employers, also sheltered under the umbrella of 'real jobs' when the definition was expanded. Paid jobs through SEP in the sheltered workshop environment were also referred to as 'real jobs' despite such jobs not being with local or community employers.

Unpaid placements featured extensively in two projects, ostensibly to extend choice and offer work experience. Project 2 offered unpaid work experience, between 6-12 weeks, as the first stage in assessing their suitability for the SPS. The terminology used to describe this ranged from 'job sampling', 'job shadowing', 'work tasters', and 'work experience placements'. Clients would be informed at the outset whether they were being placed in positions which could be offered as a paid job at the end of the trial period.

The approach to unpaid placements adopted by Project 3 was more ambiguous. The major plank of its employment strategy was to provide unpaid placements. Early in the fieldwork, the methodology where individuals about to start jobs would be approached about their aspirations and ideas, clashed with the way the project operated. Staff constantly reminded me not to refer to the 'placement' as 'a job' in the interview. It was policy to start all jobs as unpaid placements, even though some had been negotiated as paid positions with the employer. Only if and when the employer, job coach and student were happy with progress, would the placement be offered as a paid job. Many jobs were described as 'rolling placements' or unpaid positions with private employers. These increased in frequency when the programme changed towards the end of fieldwork. Thus students had frequent opportunities to try out different employment situations, although not as paid jobs.

Unpaid placements were perceived as necessary for a number of reasons which included high unemployment; funders who gauged success purely in terms of the number of people in jobs (paid or unpaid); and the disadvantaged position of people with learning disabilities in the job market because they had little or no work experience. Coming to terms with losing a placement situation was assumed to be less painful than losing a paid job by staff in Project 3. This is illustrated in the staff comment below:

"If for whatever reason it is not working out, we say 'Well done, you did well', try and accentuate the positives and talk about 'Well, you did not do this or this so well'. Well if they lose a job, something goes wrong and it falls through it is harder on their self confidence. We try to cushion them. I've seen it all too often fall through at the last minute."

The philosophy of Project 1 - *"the going rate for the job, an equal day's pay for an equal day's work"* - militated against unpaid placements, although this strategy had been tried in the early days of the project. The manager concluded however, that providing job training and support to unpaid jobs wasted scarce resources better used to support paid jobs. Adopting this strategy was not without its

drawbacks. As already noted, one of the reasons projects use job trials or placements is to offer people with limited vocational experience opportunities to experience work culture and the demands of work whilst remaining on benefits, before deciding upon a more permanent career. One consequence of not offering placements was dubbed the 'revolving door syndrome':

"Quite frequently people start their job, stick at it for three or four months, then look for an alternative. What we do is provide that service all over again."
(Manager, Project 1)

This presented unique management challenges. On balance, Project 1 still preferred to believe that the experience gained from leaving an unsuitable paid job for a better job, placed individuals with limited vocational experience in a stronger position when applying for other jobs, and that it was a more positive experience for the individual in the round.

2. Core Feature - Individual support

Providing support is a key element of the model of supported employment. Of itself, this is not a new phenomenon. It is however part of a changing paradigm from service to support and is rooted firmly in the principle of normalization (see chapter 3). The change originally envisaged by the support paradigm has an ideological basis relating to the way it is conceptualised, negotiated and implemented (Callahan & Garner, 1997). Theoretically the support model contrasts sharply with the readiness model and traditional facility-based services.

One might pose the question to what extent provision of support is of itself an identifier for the supported employment model? Wertheimer (1992a), in discussing quality dimensions of support in respect of supported employed, identified certain key features of the support - it should be individual, long-term, varied, flexible, encourage social integration and be available to anyone who wants to work, regardless of the severity of disability. In the early stages of formulating a research proposal I came across an array of employment services all providing support of some kind but lacking other distinguishing characteristics of the model, which prompted me to ask what makes supported employment different? There was considerable confusion about whether many of the services were providing supported employment or not.

A strong statement from the manager of Project 2 indicates the centrality of support to their understanding of the essence of supported employment:

"If it doesn't require ongoing service support, then it's not supported employment."

One of the most difficult issues for supported employment projects was how they reconciled the notion of 'long term support' with limited resources and the demands of funders. The provision of long-term

support was an ideological issue that was problematic to translate into practice, exacerbated by funders expectations of high volumes of job placements. Ironically, it was Project 3, with the largest staff group which drew most attention to this issue:

"That's where I part company with the Americans because you give as much support as he needs, for as long as he needs. Fine, but can you imagine many people who are going to pay for two years of support work from an instructor?"
(Director, Project 3)

The sober reality was "it's what you've got money to cope with". Limited time (6 weeks maximum) for job support was the standard commonly given. Only in Project 1 was there evidence that ongoing support sometimes lasted beyond a few weeks, though this clearly caused pressure in the staff team. It was the only project to have intensive job support input after several months in the job. The nature and extent of support provided to the individuals in the study is discussed in Chapter 8.

Finally, under the heading of support I need to make brief mention to 'natural supports'. A much abused term in relation to support, this has come to mean different things. However, there is a growing consensus among both academics and practitioners in the field of employment, that including natural supports in the workplace in the placement strategy is an increasingly important goal (Butterworth et al, 1996). All three projects were well aware of the debate around natural supports in the workplace, and were at an early stage in implementing these ideas. None of the projects for example, were operating what has been termed 'structured co-worker training' (Callahan & Garner, 1997).

3. Core Feature - Local Employers

Supported employment was understood by all the projects to involve finding jobs with local or private employers. This turned out to be the case, whether or not the job was paid. This aspect of a 'real job' was universally emphasised, while pay was not. However, under its definition of supported employment, Project 2 also included jobs provided through SEP at the sheltered workshop environment.

Securing an individual job placement with a local employer was not in itself perceived as a measure of success. On the basis that all its jobs were with local employers, Project 3 chose to work with relatively few employers who were felt to be sympathetic and negotiated several placements with the same employers. This may have been contrary to guidance on supported employment from the US, which advises that the number of people with disabilities employed at any one worksite should not exceed the ratio of people with disabilities in the general population. The reason Project 3 gave for finding multiple placements with one employer was that it was necessary to "get a foot in the door". The following quotation illustrates their approach:

"If we've got a student in a company, we'll have a look around and we'll maybe create another job. We would never go into an employment situation where the person was getting less for the job than the going rate, but the job itself might have been modified."
(Manager, Project 3)

This arose from an assumption that not many employers would be sympathetic to employing people with disabilities. Although the attitudes of employers have been identified as a barrier to employment for people with disabilities (See Chapter 2), experience elsewhere suggests that successful alliances can still be formed with a wide variety of employers.

4. Core Feature - Use of Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI)

Training in Systematic Instruction or TSI, has been discussed in Chapter 3. It is my intention here just to deal with the projects' comments on TSI in relation to their definitions of supported employment. Although not specifically mentioned in US definitions of supported employment, TSI is a feature of the supported employment approach generally. Wertheimer (1996) identified TSI as a defining feature of the UK model. In this study all three projects highlighted TSI in their definitions, had staff trained in its application, and were applying TSI in a range of employment settings.

Although identified as an important feature in defining supported employment, it was not the most important feature except that is, for Project 3. Its manager drew attention to what she termed "*supported training*" as the defining feature of supported employment from her perspective. It was not necessary for supported employment to be only about paid jobs, but it was necessary that the approach included support using the "*powerful training tool - TSP*". The Manager's view was that it was "*a waste of a good method of training*" if TSI were only applied to paid jobs. In this project TSI was being used to support paid jobs, unpaid placements and voluntary work, and was also adapted to teach social skills.

THE PROCESS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

The process of supported employment has been discussed in more detail in chapter 3. The common elements of supported employment in the UK have been summarised by Beyer & Kilsby (1997) under five core activities: - vocational or career profiling; job search; job analysis and matching with suitable employees; on-the-job training; and lastly, ongoing support. Although such categorisation does provide a useful starting point from which to compare different supported employment projects, it does suggest a linear process, which I did not find to be the case in this research. Additionally, there was a further element of the process that it seemed appropriate to describe as 'job preparation'. Clearly the process, or sequence of actions, experienced by service users will be influenced by the

service goals and objectives, the project's philosophy, and the definition of supported employment adopted. By now the reader will be aware that these can vary between supported employment projects with the implication that some of the stages described above may be excluded. Using the key elements of the ideal process, the process followed by each project is discussed and contrasted.

Vocational or Career Profiling

The projects in question used different methods to work towards the articulation of individuals' wishes and future aspirations. Differences in the degree and quality of individual planning were marked. Planning was not always systematic, nor comprehensive. Project 3, for example, spent less time building a comprehensive picture of the individual initially, and more on assessing skills, enhancing qualifications and improving social skills. Individuals' career choices were determined on an ongoing basis by staff assessment, over the length of time they stayed in the programme. It was subsequently difficult to ascertain where the planning process began and ended. An initial interview with the individual prior to acceptance into the programme, was intended to establish a general career direction. This influenced the type of placement offered initially, but could change as a result of performance in placements. A 'placement record' was kept for each person to monitor progress and as a reference for future job matching. The entry application form required applicants to indicate first, second and third job choices.

Project 3 used the Occupational Case Analysis Interview Rating, an assessment scale known as the Keilhoffner (after the author) to evaluate future vocational potential. It was originally developed for use with patients in mental illness hospitals but was felt by the project to "*work equally well with learning difficulties students*". Each section of the assessment form was completed independently by different project staff and collated during a progress meeting chaired by an occupational therapist from the NHS Trust. A 'work report' resulted that identified 'ideal career choices' for the individual. This process was perceived as beneficial to staff in building a dynamic mental picture of an individual which could be referred to in group discussions, but did not result in the creation of a vocational profile for the individual:

"In the centre we would find out what their skills are: for example, reading and writing skills. If a placement comes up which requires money skills then centre staff and job trainers would be able to suggest who might fit the job."

(Project worker from Project 3)

Those who did not attend the in-centre programme were known as 'outreach students'. Their career choices were largely determined by professionals' assessment at referral, as staff from Project 3 did not undertake home-based assessment. There was a degree of scepticism expressed by staff in this project that the information needed to match people into jobs could be encapsulated within a vocational profile form.

In both Project 1 and Project 2, staff used a traditional vocational profile form, which they had adapted from the original TSI Associates proforma. Completing this form involved investing time with the individual and his/her supporters (paid and unpaid). All of Project 1's clients experienced this process. An individual vocational profile was created over a period of weeks and sometimes months, from meetings with the individual at his/her home, day centre, the local Job Centre, the project's office and other places relevant to the individual. Undertaking a vocational profile had a positive value in helping an individual shape his/her career, and was considered to be personally 'empowering'. As the manager of Project 1 stated, its purpose was *"to facilitate them to tell us what they want"*.

As with Project 1, the value of the vocational profile was not in question for Project 2. A direct link with job search and matching was suggested by the comment that the profile was a *"ready reckoner if a job comes up."* The difference between Projects 1 and 2 was that this was not standard practice for all clients of Project 2. Whether a vocational profile was undertaken was down to the *"judgment of the officer"*, and depended upon the individual's assessed *"level of intelligence and what they wanted to do"*. In general vocational profiles that were compiled would take a period of two or more weeks, assuming individuals would have little or no work history. At the start of the research, Project 2 was undertaking this activity in small groups but soon moved to individual meetings. Different workers in Project 2 would compile the vocational profile. Assessments carried out by the Department of Employment Advisors for SEP referrals were taken as a substitute for a vocational profile.

Decidedly more time was given to exploring the nature and implications of specific vocational choices in Project 2, a practice fitting well with a project emphasising informed choice. It made use of the Vocational Guidance Pack and Occupations Cards from the Careers and Occupational Information Centre. These included a series of leaflets that outlined specific occupations requiring few or no academic qualifications, and were used to direct discussions with individuals. Although this tool supported the goal of informed choice, it may have resulted in a narrow range of 'realistic' jobs based upon professionals' perceptions rather than the dreams and wishes of individuals with learning disabilities.

Job Preparation

All three projects undertook activities that I have categorised as 'job preparation'. This included a range of activities designed to support individuals in preparing and planning for job interviews, and increasing their awareness of what it would mean to have a job. Project 1 scheduled regular individual meetings and also ran a type of job club. This was limited to four participants at any one time, and consisted of a one-hour weekly meeting for ten to twelve weeks. As well as learning how to complete job application forms and prepare a CV, the sessions focused on job-interview practice using role play and video. This was an opportunity to hear from those already in work. The aim was to empower

people in various aspects of seeking, finding and maintaining employment, as well as building self-confidence.

CVs are a culturally expected and valued aspect of job searching. Despite this, only Project 1 routinely helped people to prepare CVs. The existence of a CV can foster an individual focus and offer employers useful background information about individual job seekers. Project 2 did compile CVs with its clients, but not those with learning disabilities. Project 3 did not recognise the value of this practice.

Project 2 was running job club groups for around six participants at the start of the research in different geographical locations, with a particular focus at each meeting on completing a vocational profile with one or two individuals. The in-centre programme of Project 3 included job club sessions. Groups of at least ten people met for what were loosely-structured sessions, planned on an ad hoc basis. Project 3 also ran group sessions tackling social skills in the workplace. As has already been discussed, in preparation for paid jobs, both Projects 2 and 3 offered unpaid work experience placements.

Job Search

To find job opportunities for their clients or students, projects had to establish contacts with employers. The literature implies this is dependent upon the employment service developing an understanding of the type of work the job seeker desires prior to developing jobs (Griffin et al, 1995). In other words, job search should be based upon the vocational profile or similar. To begin with, not all supported employees had a personal vocational profile.

Project 1's comprehensive approach to compiling vocational profiles fed naturally into a job finding process which involved all staff through regular team meetings discussing the kinds of jobs current clients were seeking. All staff in Project 1 were involved in job search because in the manager's view that offered "*a greater chance of finding the jobs the clients want.*". On the face of it, the predominant approach to job search in Project 1 was 'jobs for people', although responding to advertised job positions and opportunistic contacts with employers sometimes resulted in a 'people for jobs' approach. There was at the very least, a clear connection between the vocational profile and job search activities.

Project 2 delegated the task of job finding to just two or three senior team members, who in general had not compiled the vocational profile, although they managed the staff who had. There was a mixture of the two typical job-finding approaches evident in Project 2. Efforts were made to base job

search on the vocational profile, but evidently staff searching for jobs also had their own ideas in relation to the prevailing job market:

"Clients say what they want to do, there's past experience of work and I get a gut feeling for their personality and where they might fit in."
(Job finder in Project 2)

Job search strategies included 'cold' and 'warm' calls to employers. This refers to whether the employer is a new employer to the project, in which case it would be a 'cold call', a known contact or prior colleague, in which case the contact is described as 'warm'. Contacts with employers were based around a number of strategies: ongoing links with employer organisations including the Round Table, 'cold calls' to local employers explaining what the service offered and 'warm calls' to previous contacts - *"I take folk to lunch who I know"*. Inevitably, the types of jobs found became dependent on the networking skills and creativity of designated job-finders. Some staff also perceived the 'jobs for people' approach as 'idealistic' and impractical in the face of high levels of local unemployment.

As shown above, comprehensive planning for individuals prior to job search was not a feature of the service offered by Project 3. It was assumed that job seekers came to the project with little or even no work experience, and needed opportunities to try out, as well as prove to others, that they could operate within a working environment. The kind of jobs and workplaces found therefore, were in a sense of less importance than finding a range of work experience placements to suit a generalised need. Predominantly, a 'people for jobs' approach operated. Only one member of staff in Project 3 was involved in job search, although an existing employer to set up another placement at the same worksite would sometimes approach other staff. Job search was more ad hoc and minimal staff time was devoted to it. In addition, the focus was to ensure a limited number of 'sympathetic' employers who could offer work placements and paid jobs. The job finder stated, *"I'm not that organised, but I do get jobs"*.

In recent years the emphasis of supported employment has been on selling the right person for the job, job support from job coaches and ongoing monitoring and support to employers. This has required social services to learn a new vocabulary of business and marketing. Until recently terms such as cold call, sales, marketing, public relations, advertising, negotiating job development and media relations etc. were alien to social services. In general, this is viewed as the way forward. It has meant that employment specialists have tended towards agency-centred negotiations with employers, more than an employee focus. It was for instance, more common for staff in the projects to leave promotional materials about the supported employment project with an employer, than an individual's CV.

In all the projects, the individual job seeker was playing a limited role in job search activities. Generally projects undertook tours of workplaces on an individual or group basis, and encouraged individuals to express opinions about job possibilities presented to them. In Project 1 they were also

encouraged to attend an interview with an employer prior to being offered or accepting a job. There was no evidence that all supported employment staff, let alone individuals with learning disabilities and their supporters (family, friends, neighbours) were being involved in devising the job search strategies as envisaged by more recent writers (Callahan & Garner, 1997; Hagner & Dileo, 1993).

Job Analysis & Matching

The concept of 'job analysis' refers to the process of finding out how a job should be done. Employment specialists commonly assess job tasks, the physical environment, work procedures, and importantly, workplace culture. All the projects undertook job analysis prior to developing training strategies and had some form of recording this analysis in the main. Varying amounts of time were spent 'walking the job', from one day to a couple of weeks.

'Job matching' is the action of matching the aspirations of the job seeker to the needs of employers. How well this is done will clearly be affected by the preceding stages of vocational profiling and job search activities. Matching was a decision commonly made at staff meetings. In Project 1 staff discussed individual employment objectives and new positions that had arisen. An attempt was made to match job specifications with information from vocational profiles on the basis of a grid to get the best fit. They were extremely self critical about this aspect of their work and were constantly looking for ways to improve the 'success' of job matching, but were also realistic in outlook:

"It's just a fact of life that after people have spent time in a particularly dirty, horrible job, working night shifts, for example, that they get fed up and want to leave."

Project 2 felt they had "a good idea of who we're working with and where we're at". Decisions regarding job matches were taken at both formal and informal staff meetings. In contrast, the predominant 'people for jobs' approach practised by Project 3 meant job-matching decisions were based on a more generalised understanding of individuals' work objectives. Conflicts between the perceptions of an individual held by in-centre and job support staff could cause disagreements about which individuals were ready for 'going out' of the centre. When a placement was found the job finder in Project 3 discussed the job with the whole staff group. Below is a typical discussion from one of the team meetings I observed:

"Spoke about a new job. It is a reception job. The job conditions were discussed. The job finder said she was putting the job on the table before working out if a trainer was available. Someone suggested C (one of the sample individuals). She was smart and well able to answer phones. Her benefits would be affected as she lives in a hostel. The job finder suggested splitting the job into two. The in-centre staff protested that they were not being considered about who goes out. "I thought we didn't have any trainers?" The job finder replies, "Well it's a paid job". C could go in on a placement basis and that way we keep the job...One of the in-centre staff adds that it will be interesting to see if C will consider this job as she had expressed a preference for another kind of work..."

Training & Ongoing Support

The following quotation summarises the general approach of supported employment staff in the projects to providing job support:

"It might mean modifying a job so that the person can manage it and be successful in it, or it may mean aids and adaptations. Getting in there and advocating for the person, being a diplomat, picking up the pieces because someone has a mental health problem, or practical help like accompanying them to a hospital appointment."
(Worker in Project 2)

Essentially, supported employment meant *"giving support to people who would find it difficult to sustain a job without some level of support."* (Manager, Project 2). In the projects studied, support typically meant help with deciding between different occupational choices, help preparing for jobs and attending interviews, on-the-job training, and some kind of ongoing monitoring and review once the employee was established in the job. The type and extent of support would vary and depend on the individual, and to an extent on the service option. Unfortunately, there had not been time to undertake structured observations of the type of job supports on-site and across the projects as part of the fieldwork, although data was collected on the support individuals in the sample received, and this is analysed in chapter 8.

Long term or ongoing monitoring support might involve as little as a regular monthly or less frequent telephone call to an employer or the supported employee to more intensive negotiations, long-term job support, and arbitration between a dissatisfied employer and employee. It might involve retraining the employee in new tasks. When regular support was no longer required even of the infrequent variety, the manager of Project 2 argued that it ceased to be supported employment becoming instead, competitive or open employment.

All were offering traditional job coaching services as described by Murphy, Rogan and Fisher (1996) that is intensive on-site training and intervention until the employee learns the job well enough for that involvement to fade to a less intensive level. On-site job training support was the standard approach, regardless of the setting (sheltered or integrated employment) or whether the job was paid or not. It could last for as little as one day or go on for several weeks. However, not all supported employees, required job support. Making such an assumption was felt to be damaging to the individual:

"It is giving a very powerful signal that they will need job coaches and it's not true. There has been as much individual variation in the support as individuals coming forward."
(Manager Project 2)

Support strategies included finding ways to retain people in jobs for as long as possible, particularly in Project 1. Substantial staff meeting time was given over to discussing how to overcome problems at

individual worksites. Formal contracts were sometimes drawn up with employers and employees to clarify expectations.

The amount and intensity of support from staff in Project 2 correlated with the service option. For example, it was assumed that clients on the SEP, who were deemed 'capable of work' by DEAs, would need only minimal, if any, support in a job. This contrasted with strategies for supporting part-time jobs incorporating intensive on-the-job training and support. This was not a stock response however, and there were exceptions to this pattern. Official requirements of the SEP dictated the need for regular monitoring and reviews, a minimum requirement of a twice-annual review, and such systems were evident in Project 2. Systems of quality control, monitoring and review were the most advanced in relation to the SEP option.

Support was an ill-defined element in Project 3's approach, although it shared common elements with the other projects. In practice, both group activities and individual one-to-one job training and monitoring were considered to be providing support. There was no distinction between the type of support required to train for unpaid placements, voluntary work or paid jobs. Some of the work placements came complete with a package of three weeks job support, whether the individual needed it or not, while other job placements received 2-5 weeks on-the-job support that was tailor-made.

SUMMARY

The differences between the projects were too complex and multi-faceted to summarise in a single statement. Clearly, the differences in structure, emphases, definition of the support model, and the process of supported employment described above, are enough to suggest that the experience of supported employment would be different for supported employees with each project. Supported employment in a sense was an unfulfilled concept, fraught with contradictions and 'loopholes'. The operational parameters of relative concepts such as 'real jobs', 'ongoing support', or 'individual focus' remained open to interpretation. As McLoughlin et al (1987) observed, despite 'integrated' and 'supported' employment becoming buzzwords, the operational parameters remained largely undefined. Prevailing practice reflects a wide diversity of opinion amongst agencies. The findings about three contemporary supported employment settings examined in this study support this view. Some of the projects' main features are summarised in Table 2 below for ease of comparison:

Table 2: Essential Features of the Supported Employment Services

PROJECT	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3
Service Sector	Voluntary	Local Authority	Voluntary
User Group	People with learning disabilities	People with learning disabilities/ physical disabilities/ mental illness	People with learning disabilities
Summary of service type	Individual job support	Individual job support, SEP, SPS, job sampling, sheltered work, voluntary work	Individual job support, SPS, work placements, vocat. training, voluntary work, in-centre programme incl. social skills training
Unpaid Placements	No	Yes	Yes
Main Emphases	Securing paid jobs Quality of life Choice Individual rights Person centred services	Securing paid jobs Integration Choice Individual Rights	Quality of life Increasing independence
Size of staff group	5	7-8	24

The projects recognised and agreed upon four key ingredients of supported employment - paid jobs, integrated or local employers, individual support and use of TSI - but they blended these ingredients in different ways which resulted in supported employment services which looked and felt qualitatively different. The interesting question was whether and how, would these affected individual outcomes: something, which will be commented on in chapters 7-9.

Significantly, two of the projects had developed from pre-existing employment services, having adapted past approaches to embrace the new support model. Their approach clearly incorporated elements of a 'procedural' or 'eligibility' model of assessment as defined by Sanderson et al (1997). By this is meant a focus on assessing individuals against service criteria to allocate them to different options within a programme. In this sense a service continuum was operating. Taylor (1988), and Beyer et al (1997; 1996a) have previously highlighted the existence of continuum models in relation to supported employment developments in both the USA and the UK.

Supported employment was originally developed to be an innovative structure for providing vocational training and support to individuals who otherwise would have difficulty finding and maintaining themselves in jobs. The model has much in common with newer person-centred approaches. In recent years employment specialists have favoured a marketing or business-based approach and this has generally been positive. However, focusing on agency marketing during employer negotiations seemed to take the focus away from the person-centred negotiations. Bach (1994) has argued that 'realistic' vocational goals are based upon assumptions about the local labour market and the prevailing assumptions about the place of people with learning disabilities in that labour market. As a consequence, these goals are not so much empowering individuals to achieve their unique potential, as consigning them to a few poorly paid jobs. It will be for a later chapter to discuss whether this is what happened to the individuals in the research sample.

The baggage of 'employability' or the 'readiness' was also evidently a feature of supported employment services. The term 'employability' is based upon the assumption that some people are ready for employment, while others are not. They are either 'incapable' of work or must undergo a period of training in preparation for work. As commented above, the process of supported employment in two of the projects involved assessing individuals' eligibility for different programme options, and in addition, one was explicitly tackling individuals' perceived deficits in social skills as a separate programme. This does not sit easily with the philosophy and values of the supported employment model.

CHAPTER 6:

PROFILE & PERCEPTIONS OF THE STUDY SAMPLE BEFORE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a profile of the 18 individuals from the three supported employment projects described in the previous chapter. It also explores their initial perceptions about supported employment and those of their carers and employment specialist staff. Permission was obtained from each individual to interview the person(s) whom they identified as their main carer(s), as well as the supported employment worker who was most familiar with them. Carers were relatives such as a parent or spouse, or they were paid staff who knew the person well. All three types of interview took place once notified by the project workers that someone had secured a job.

For sixteen individuals a set of three pre-employment interviews were achieved, while for two, a carer was not identified. Due to the nature of the research design (see Chapter 4), individuals were recruited into the study at different times over an 18 month period, as and when they were matched with jobs. The information presented offers the foundation for comparison with outcome data obtained after individuals had been in supported employment jobs for at least nine months.

The chapter is now divided into two main parts: in Part One the sample characteristics including sex, age, degree of learning disability, and living situation are examined. This information is explored by project for comparison and contrast. In the more substantial Part Two, a picture is painted of the sample individuals' initial perceptions before the job started, including how they were engaged prior to supported employment, what the supported employment service meant to them, and their aspirations and expectations of supported employment.

PART ONE: INDIVIDUAL'S CHARACTERISTICS

(1) Sex of Supported Employees in the Sample

There were twice as many males as females amongst those interviewed. This discrepancy was due in large part to the sample from Project 1 being exclusively male. Although this project was working with both sexes, its clientele was predominantly male at the time, and all of those who secured jobs

during the study period were males. There were slightly more females than males in Project 2. The method of sampling which sought to include people about to start jobs over a period of a year relied on notification from staff and that meant it was difficult, if not impossible, to control for the variable of sex.

Table 3: Sex of the Sample

SEX	PROJECT ONE	PROJECT TWO	PROJECT THREE	TOTAL NUMBER
MALE	6	3	3	12
FEMALE	-	4	2	6

This finding implies a potential inequality between the sexes in accessing supported employment opportunities. It is not dissimilar to other research findings; for example, the OPCS (1988) found higher rates of unemployment among disabled women than disabled men. The National Development Team survey of UK supported employment (Lister et al, 1992) found a similar predominance of men which they commented was at odds with the overall employment statistics for Great Britain. The follow-up survey in 1995 (Beyer et al, 1996b) found a similar pattern. Lister et al explained this by concluding that men become labelled as having learning disabilities more readily than women. An alternative explanation may lie in the social construction of gender and disability. Morris (1994, p 213) for example, argues that the social construction of gender has significantly shaped the experience of men and women with disabilities:

“There is considerable evidence that - because rehabilitation services are predominantly concerned with maximising men’s employment opportunities - women’s employment needs have not generally been addressed.”

However, in the absence of more extensive data on the numbers actually served by these projects over a longer period, it would be unwise to make anything other than tentative conclusions. In a questionnaire that was answered by managers at the beginning of the research, information was requested about the sex and age of service users with learning disabilities over the previous year. Interestingly this revealed that while the above picture, that is more males than females served, remained true for Projects 1 and 2 (over 70% of clients with learning disabilities in the previous year had been male), it was atypical for Project 3. In this project, only 44% of the previous year’s students had been male. I can offer no particular explanation at this point for this difference.

(2) Age of Supported Employees in Sample

The study sample were of a predominantly young age. Exactly half were aged 20-24 years. The highest proportion were aged between 20-34 years (13 out of 18 individuals). This was the same for

all of the projects and shows similarities with the findings of quantitative surveys such as those undertaken by Lister et al (1992), and Beyer et al (1996b), and as these authors highlight, this pattern differs from the age profile of the general employment workforce as found in the 1991 Census Survey. There was only one person in the study sample who was over 40 years of age. This trend was reflected in data obtained from the questionnaire which asked about the age and sex of clients served in the previous year. That showed around 62% were aged 34 years or under, and it was the same for all projects, but even more so for Project 2 which had 83% of its clients aged 34 years or under. Such a finding implies there may be a trend for supported employment services generally to be provided to younger people, as well as strong links between supported employment agencies, Career Services and the Department of Employment Advisers, traditionally working with young disabled people, though not exclusively.

Although there was no direct evidence of discrimination by the projects towards older people with learning disabilities, it is likely that many older people who have been recipients of day services will have been attending adult resource centres or similar facilities and that day centre staff might be less optimistic about their chances in employment. It was the case that certain sources of funding obtained by Project 3 led to a bias towards developing programmes for school leavers or younger people with learning disabilities, such as European monies to develop vocational training programmes.

Table 4: Age Profile of the Sample

<i>AGE</i>	<i>PROJECT ONE</i>	<i>PROJECT TWO</i>	<i>PROJECT THREE</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
20-24	4	4	1	9
25-29	-	-	-	-
30-34	-	1	3	4
35-39	2	1	1	4
40+	-	1	-	1

(3) Definition of ‘Learning Disabilities’

This research did not set out to measure ‘learning disability’ through adaptive behaviour scales and/or IQ assessments that would place the interviewees into pre-set categories (see chapter 4). I was more interested in the meaning behind the labels used and how these translated into services. The study sample included 18 individuals whom supported employment projects were categorising as people with ‘learning disabilities’. Ultimately, the choice of who would be included in the study was determined by project criteria. The analysis therefore focused on the projects’ classification systems.

The descriptive words used by staff and main carers betrayed their origins in earlier medical and behaviourist definitions. Terms were used such as 'borderline', 'mild', 'moderate' and 'severe' learning disabilities, all terms which hark back to the 1940s and 1950s when, somewhat ironically given the particular context of the support model, descriptive groupings were proposed according to contemporary notions of 'employability' (Race, 1995). Although a low IQ is generally taken to be an indicator of learning disability, supported employment staff did not make routine use of, nor did they seek IQ scores from other professionals, unlike their counterparts in the USA. Assessments of individual IQ scores were not therefore available as data for the study.

The main finding was that the individuals in the sample were predominantly categorised by project workers as people with 'mild learning disabilities'. For seven people there had been no formal or professional assessment recorded as such. They had acquired the label of 'learning disabilities' purely on the basis of service use or history. The remainder, with one exception who it was stated had 'considerable disabilities', were described as having either a 'mild', 'moderate', 'very mild or moderate', or 'borderline;' learning disability.

Five people had been officially registered disabled: one from Project 1, three from Project 2 and one from Project 3. Eligibility for the government sponsored SEP requires an individual to be registered disabled in this way. It should not be surprising that more individuals in Project 2 were registered disabled, given that this Project made the most use of the scheme, indeed it began its life as sponsor for the Sheltered Placement Scheme before adopting a supported employment approach. National research classified over 70% of those served by supported employment services as being within a borderline/mild/moderate category (Beyer et al, 1996b; Lister et al, 1992). The present study would appear to support this.

Individuals were sometimes described in terms of physical impairments or adaptive functioning. Two individuals had severe epilepsy; one had Down's syndrome; others had physical impairments caused by prenatal and post-natal conditions such as hydrocephalus and cystic fibrosis; and two had "serious mental health problems" which were felt to be more severe than their learning disability. For two individuals there was a lack of comprehension of time that was taken as illustrative of a learning disability, along with academic difficulties at school. Only two individuals had mild speech problems. All of the people in the sample were mobile and had no significant physical impairment. Four people needed some assistance with travelling on public transport, particularly when travelling on unfamiliar routes, but the vast majority were individuals who were capable of independent travel.

Learning disability was evidenced in relation to difficulties with particular skills such as independent living skills and social skills. Supported employment workers described some people as "very capable" but as "less able than they appear". Although on first reading this seems contradictory I

would suggest that it might express a dilemma employment professionals felt in providing an intensive support service to individuals whom they described as people with 'mild' or 'borderline' disabilities. One might wonder if they needed such a service at all. This suggests that project staff were aware that the client group being served were not those with the most severe disabilities, yet they were still deemed to need support. It also illustrates the complex and hidden nature of the phenomenon of 'learning disability', and the operational difficulties in reaching a satisfactory definition that is more about degree rather than an absolute measure (Malin, 1995; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Most individuals in the sample were independent in relation to self-care, although five were stated to need minimal help that included giving verbal prompts to take a shower or to wash. Similarly most were deemed able to manage domestic chores, although four were stated to have limitations in this area. These limitations were felt to be more about motivation and/or limited opportunities at home or in the hostel than inherent ability. Six individuals needed help with spelling and completing official forms such as welfare benefits forms, and 12 were reported as having good reading and written skills. Difficulties in money management and budgeting were identified as a significant problem for at least seven individuals. By far the biggest area of difficulty identified was in what staff termed 'social skills'. Eight were said to be lacking in self-confidence and/or had limited social opportunities.

Given the profile above of the individuals in the sample, it can be concluded that supported employment services were being delivered to those whom services defined as 'mild or moderate learning disabilities', not those with more severe impairments. It might be claimed that the research sample was not representative of the project populations as a whole, but this is not a strong argument, given that the sample was collected over a lengthy period of time and should be fairly reflective of any predominant tendencies in the service populations. Additional information obtained through questionnaire showed that the projects identified the vast majority of their clients as 'people with mild-moderate learning disabilities'. While this was true for Projects 2 and 3, Project 1 stated the degree of learning disability of their client population as 'not known' to reflect the philosophical emphasis on capability over dis-ability.

It can only be speculated upon as to why individuals with more severe learning disabilities were not referred to the supported employment services included in the study. The finding supports Taylor's (1988) observation that professionals working with people with learning disabilities match people along a continuum of services with the employment option deemed most suitable for people with less severe impairments, or those who staff feel are 'ready' to work. I would also speculate that a strong emphasis on results in terms of the number of people securing jobs (both paid and unpaid), rather than targeting people with the most severe disabilities would also produce such a bias. There is some evidence to suggest that the emphasis of funders veers towards counting numbers of people in jobs

rather than quality aspects, or whether or not the services are supporting people with high support needs.

(4) Living Circumstances of Supported Employees in the Sample

The individuals in the sample came from a variety of backgrounds. Half were living at home with parents, and very often with other siblings. Given the age profile of the interviewees this is probably not an unusual finding. The difference between the sexes was in the higher number of males than females, who were living at home, of whom equal numbers were living at home or in institutional settings. It was most typical for interviewees from Projects 1 and 2 to be living at home, while none of those served by Project 3 lived at home. Project 3 was working almost exclusively with individuals living in institutional settings, (hospital, hostel or group homes) and made less attempt to work closely with carers in compiling a profile than the other projects.

Table 5: Living Circumstances at the Pre-employment Interview

	<i>PROJECT ONE</i>	<i>PROJECT TWO</i>	<i>PROJECT THREE</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
HOME TYPE				
Parental Home	4	5	-	9
Hostel	1	-	3	4
Hospital	-	-	1	1
Group Home	-	2	-	2
Independent	1	-	1	2

Recent research on supported employment published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Bass & Drewett, 1996), found that social security provision and arrangements for paying for accommodation could be powerful influences in planning suitable jobs in terms of the hours worked and wage levels. It will therefore, be important to reconsider this variable in later chapters on outcomes. By the end of fieldwork, two individuals had moved into supported accommodation in the community, one (Project 3) moving from a hospital for people with learning disabilities, the other (Project 1) from his parental home.

PART TWO: PERCEPTIONS & OPINIONS - PRE-EMPLOYMENT

The interviews with supported employees and their relatives or carers were guided conversations with a list of topics on which interviewees were encouraged to talk freely and to raise issues they saw as important. The project worker interviews on the other hand, were structured, having specific questions

and issues to cover, although they were encouraged to raise any other issues they saw as important in relation to each individual. It was only after two or three informal meetings with the 18 individuals in the sample, that interviews were attempted: thus, after a certain amount of rapport had been established. A few exceptions to this occurred when notification of the person starting in work was only given one or two days in advance. This happened in five cases. Out of necessity, interviews with these individuals were conducted on first meeting. The pre-employment interviews explored individual reasons for wanting a job, feelings about current occupation, how people had found out about and what was understood by the terms 'supported employment', and their hopes and expectations in order to explore the subjective experiences of supported employment.

Pre-employment Activities

The data obtained about the activities people in the sample were engaged in prior to being in jobs is limited. Due to sampling design, there was often little time to monitor engagement prior to their starting in jobs, and secondly, the main focus of the study was the meaning and outcomes of supported employment. The following analysis therefore offers a necessarily brief and impressionistic picture of these activities.

In summary, participants in the sample were either attending day centres (nine individuals), considered themselves out of work or unemployed (six individuals), attending college (two individuals), or had recently been assessed by the Department of Employment (one individual) immediately preceding the job they were about to start. They had had a range of work-related experiences: many for example, had experienced work placements as part of a pre-vocational college course or through day centres.

Special Day Centre & College

Half of the sample was attending some type of day centre before they became involved in supported employment. However, this finding is misleading if it suggests that a high proportion of those served by the projects included in this study were referred from day centres. Four of these nine were attending the in-centre facility operated by Project 3 immediately prior to starting in a job. The remaining individual served by Project 3 was described as an 'outreach student' which basically meant he did not attend the in-centre programme.

The types of activity engaged in at day centres ranged from work-related activities such as undertaking vocational qualifications (Scotvec Modules), or gaining work experience, to leisure pursuits such as arts and crafts or sports. One person attended an arts centre for people with disabilities for pottery and woodwork. Opinions about attending the day centre were mixed. When asked how satisfied and

happy they were with going to the day centre and with what they did there, most said they were satisfied, in particular their comments reflected satisfaction with staff treatment:

"It's a lovely place. Staff are brilliant, staff are really good to you, teach you lots of things, washing, cooking, arts, gardening. We go on trips sometimes. We go swimming, I like swimming. We have discos as well and parties, and go out for Christmas lunch."

"The staff are awfy nice to you up there, really nice."

"We're going on holiday from here."

The opinions proffered about day care services ranged from effusive - "*absolutely brilliant*" - to intense dislike - "*I didn't like it - boring*". Three individuals, one from each project were to continue attending an Adult Resource Centre in addition to having a job, as the jobs secured were part-time, even when the individual disliked the day centre. For some therefore, supported employment represented a real alternative to the day care system, while for others it represented a part-time activity as part of a service timetable. Two people were attending college several days a week and would be continuing with college courses after the job started.

Attendance at a day centre and/or college offered opportunities for friendship that were significant in people's lives - "*I've got loads of friends there*". The social opportunities such as organised trips, parties, and using leisure facilities were highly valued, although not everyone had the same positive experience. One man who had worked in a sheltered environment for disabled people said - "*in the centre, you don't get the chance to chat to somebody. At the place where I'm going to be working with old folks you get a better chance of yapping away*".

In chapter 3, a significant body of research was cited which claimed that people with learning disabilities want paid jobs not day-centre places. That the comments about day centres were so positive overall is therefore challenging. The picture painted is obviously more complex than at first appeared from the evidence of other studies, some of which were quantitative in nature. Individuals in the sample were seeking alternatives to traditional day services, but they also valued aspects of attending day centres particularly opportunities for socialising and using community facilities, mixing with friends, and feeling accepted.

Unemployed Status

Six individuals described themselves as out of work or unemployed, two of whom were known to be officially registered as unemployed and claiming Income Support. They did not attend a day centre or any other specialist facility for people with learning disabilities, although they had been in contact with specialist services; for instance special college courses, at some stage. Two women spent part of their week looking after a relative or friend's children. Others engaged in voluntary work. On the whole

they were actively seeking work by visiting job centres regularly, checking job advertisements in newspapers, shops, etc. or getting help from the job coach to find a job:

"I'm just looking around now for other jobs to see what I can come up with on my own. So I go to the job centre lots of times when I can. I look in the papers."

It was these individuals who were most actively seeking a job to relieve the boredom of being at home during the day. Either people had tried to get jobs and been unsuccessful or they had been in work placements that had ended. For some there was a sense of hopelessness about the current situation:

"Sometimes I get a bit bored and fed up 'cause I wish I was out working permanently but I don't know, it's just not happening. Seems like forever."

There was therefore an expectation that a job could make a positive difference to the quality of life. That it would be a job with a community employer was important. One individual had had a full-time job for seventeen years, his first and only job since leaving school, but this had ended due to ill health. The job had been in a sheltered employment setting. Although it had been a job, the segregated setting was something that he actively disliked, so much so that he described his former workplace as *"like jail"*.

Understanding of Supported Employment

A natural line of inquiry through interviews at this stage was to explore the reasons why individuals had wanted to use supported employment services, although this proved difficult to separate from expectations. A more detailed discussion of data about expectations follows later. Supported employment was clearly meeting a variety of needs: it was both an additional service as suggested above, and an alternative to traditional day services. Whatever the reasons for wanting a job, all sought help with seeking out and maintaining themselves in jobs. Some had encountered barriers to employment in the past, from employers' prejudice towards people with disabilities, or had experienced problems staying in jobs in the longer term. All were confident that supported employment could alleviate such barriers:

"I wouldn't have the job without them. A week before the interview they had me in the office practising interview techniques, which is one of my weaknesses."

"They will help you to get a job. I had a few interviews with jobs but they just, they didn't take you 'cause they wanted somebody with experience, whatever job it was. I didn't have any."

Carers' explanations for turning to supported employment were similar:

"I don't think he would have been able to get employment without their support, they've been terrific with him every step of the way, talked everything through with him. I don't think

he would have had the confidence to go to an interview on his own. I don't think he would have had the courage to do it without their support."

However although clear about needing help to get a job, a few were unsure what 'supported employment' actually meant. Although there were those who had self-referred they were in the minority. In the majority of cases someone else had referred them (professionals or parents) because they thought employment an appropriate goal for the person. In the previous chapter the operational practices of three different supported employment services showed variation in the level of individual planning and involvement in the process, which was reflected in individuals' responses. Students from Project 3 had most difficulty formulating anything other than a generalised understanding of supported employment, as the following quotes suggest:

"I'm not sure what it's supposed to mean"

"I haven't got a clue because I'm on income support"

"I don't know what it is, give me an idea!"

User-defined definitions of supported employment usually contained two main elements: help to find jobs, and provision of on-the-job support. The process of vocational profiling in Projects 1 and 2, had created a better understanding of what they could expect from the service:

"They would talk about what kind of jobs I would like. When I start the job she'll be telling me what she was doing and I'll do whatever she was doing."

"Supported employment is when someone helps you to go in for jobs, helps you go for interview. They build you up, find out what your weaknesses are and try to help you with that by meeting with you and talking with you. Then if you get a job through them they will go and work with you for three or four weeks to help you get used to that and then gradually withdraw and leave you on your own to do the job."

Job coach involvement would be variable, ranging from daily support to no more than an arms-length monitoring role, as the following quote from an individual whom I have called Bill, describing his expectations of job support from Project 2, shows:

"Well he should be phoning and keeping in touch just to see how I'm getting on."

One individual was sceptical about supported employment, suspecting that it might amount to little more than what he perceived as the empty promises of the government's Youth Training Scheme (YTS), or the exploitation of people with disabilities:

"It sounds like it could be one of those things like YTS when you do a job every week and get £35 in your hand plus your unemployment benefits. The guys that I know who have got a job they've got to keep their DLA and their wage, but it's not much of a wage. If supported employment means working for three days a week for pennies, but you still keep your DLA, it sounds to me like a sweatshop environment."

Individual Planning: Dreams, Aspirations & Choices

Recent developments in supported employment suggested that the type of relationship between supported employees and the employment agency should be one where individuals were “empowered to express, follow and own their dreams”, even when the dreams expressed appeared incompatible with the philosophies and directions that agency personnel would choose (Callahan & Garner, 1997, p10). The notion of ‘dreams’ originates from person-centred planning, a term used to describe a number of different approaches which have evolved from progressive movements in the field of disability over the past 20 years, and in which those involved in supported employment have shown a growing interest (Wehman & Kregel, 1998). The centrality of exploring individuals’ wishes and desires is expressed by Hagner & Dileo (1993, p48) in the following quotation:

“To be really of assistance to an individual who has been labeled as disabled and denied employment opportunities, we first need to explore and discover the individual’s dreams for the future and gifts they have to offer.”

Adopting a person-centred approach in the research involved asking each individual the following question - ‘what is your ‘dream job’?’, defined as a job the individual would most like to do, a job they might dream of having or an individual interest or hobby that could be capitalised upon to help shape and guide career direction. Challenges were encountered with using concepts like ‘dreams’ and ‘aspirations’ to form the basis of questions. To my knowledge no other study of supported employment had utilised these concepts in interviews with supported employees. In other words, this was a novel approach.

All but four people in the sample were able to make a statement about personal job aspirations. Three of these were service users of Project 3. Many individuals did not express job aspirations in terms of a specific job role but in relation to seeking work in comfortable, safe and friendly settings as the following quotation illustrates:

“Any kind of job as long as the pay was right and the people were alright with you, like I say they didn’t make a fool out of you, and they didn’t take a loan of you.”

The range of self-defined job aspirations was broad and not all fell into the category of ‘entry level’ jobs, such as kitchen porter, cleaner, waitress etc. Some of the jobs would require qualifications and experience that individuals did not have. However, it is difficult to generalise from the findings because responses were at differing levels of specificity. Job types ranged from astronomer to general office work. Some answers reflected a strong sense of self-identity, for example, the quotation below illustrates one individual’s perception of his masculinity especially when this is set against his leisure and other interests in the army, pub culture, football and “going out with my mates”:

“Now you’re asking!. If I was taller, I would like to drive tanks like my pal in the army, drive an army tank. They’re not easy to drive. He drove Chieftains and Scorpions.”

Past work experience opportunities, as well as influential others, played a significant role in shaping job aspirations. The desire for some 'dream jobs' was directly related to specific job roles undertaken through work placements whilst at college: for example an individual in Project 1 who wanted to be a hospital porter and another in Project 2 who wanted to be a janitor in a community centre. Other job aspirations reflected the views of parents or professionals. Indeed there is nothing different or surprising in these findings when it is considered that the inspiration for most people's career choice comes from the job roles they are exposed to, whether through influential others including family members, authority figures and role models, or through watching television and/or reading magazines, newspapers etc. What is critical in the context of this study is the extent to which other people influence and shape what becomes an acceptable or 'realistic' career choice for individual with learning disabilities.

The literature on person-centred planning stresses that dreams need not be literal blueprints (Pearpoint et al, 1993). Their influence can importantly come from the guidance they provide rather than literal translation. They can be symbolic and therefore translated into more generalised aspirations, such as a desire for independence and personal autonomy through earning a wage, as can be inferred from this quotation from one of the interviewees:

"I'd like to be a taxi-driver. You've got your own car, look after your own money."

What was intimated to be a 'dream job' was sometimes at odds with the job they had accepted as suitable. I am not suggesting here that individuals would not perceive they had been offered choice about whether to take the job; in fact, most felt they had. The picture was more complex than that and it must be remembered respondents were asked about 'dream jobs'. For example, one person who stated he had chosen to work with horses also stated that his 'dream job' was to be a taxi or lorry driver. The desire to work with animals that he identified himself was directly related to the experience gained through voluntary work on a community farm and horse riding for disabled people that had been organised for him by professionals. Arguably then the 'choice' he had been able to make was limited by the parameters set by others, in this case, paid supporters.

One person sought light cleaning work on a part-time basis to take account of his ill health, and being 'realistic' about his options, but his dream job was to be a car mechanic. Another individual had agreed to the job offered because he had been on a work trial with his employer through Project 3 and liked the job. His dream job to drive army tanks varied considerably from this, although he stated that he did not really mind what kind of work he did. There was one example of a direct link between what the person said they wanted in the research interview and the job that was secured through supported employment - *"My dream job? The one I've got just now, it's the one I've always wanted."*

The following paragraphs look more closely at the predominant approaches of the three projects to using information about individual job aspirations in order to reflect upon whether the projects' strategies were based upon person-centred planning approaches, especially whether they encouraged individuals to express, follow and own their own dreams.

Process of Job Finding Related to Individual Job Aspirations

Operational differences between the projects were discussed in detail in the previous chapter. It is to these that I now turn in examining the process of matching individuals and jobs. A fundamental prerequisite to matching individual aspirations with jobs is the collection of comprehensive planning information. When information exists in a vocational profile (VP) it can be used to inform the job search and matching processes and also indicates that emphasis has been placed on discovering individuals' career ambitions in ways that are demanded by the growing voice of self advocates (e.g. Racino & Whittico, 1998). When such information is not collected, the chances of delivering individualised solutions are lessened. This was evident in the job selection factors emphasised by the three projects.

Project 1 workers emphasised individual preferences stated through the VP as the most important guide for job search strategies. As well as identifying specific job preferences, the VP sought to identify preferred working environment, travel preferences, whether part or full-time work was sought and so on. In one case, where an individual had been looking for a job with the project for over a year, the overriding concern however was not to secure his 'dream job' in an office which had not yet materialised, but to secure any position that was at least acceptable to him, so that he would experience workplace culture and the demands of a job.

Project 2 workers also used stated individual preferences through VP to guide job search activities. Additionally they emphasised the importance of offering work experience and raising individuals' awareness of what going to work would be like, understanding work routines and the importance of starting on time for instance. Staff cited a variety of factors to be taken into consideration in finding suitable employers such as individuals' past experience and record, the availability of 'good' employers or those who were sympathetic to employing people with disabilities and/or were prepared to provide workplace supports. Similarly to Project 1, it was suggested that for some individuals the goal was to secure any 'suitable' job to help build the person's self-confidence and give them experience of workplace culture. Thus there was a general knowledge of the job requirements preferred by individuals, but a number of other considerations came into play including the prevailing local jobs market.

In Project 3, job search was the job role of one member of the team, although staff acting as job coaches sometimes provided what were referred to as 'promising leads' with an existing employer. This fits with its strategy of operating multiple unpaid and/or paid placements through a limited number of employers. As its main emphasis was on offering work experience with local employers and promoting independence, job search activity focused on identifying employers with whom potentially a number of placements could be established for a broad range of need. Job matching was therefore driven in the main by employers' needs and only loosely directed by the project's knowledge of individual aspirations. Information available about personal preferences revolved around statements at an initial interview held with the individual and their supporters (often professionals as most lived in residential care).

Individual Involvement in Job Selection

There was almost no difference between Projects 1 and 2 in terms of involving the sample individuals in selecting the work environment or work activities. There were significant differences with Project 3 however. The majority of the sample individuals were stated to have participated in selecting their work environment: five in Project 1, six in Project 2 and three in Project 3. What participation typically consisted of was being offered a job with a particular employer, an interview (as in all cases in Project 1), but more commonly it meant receiving outline information about the job and the employer.

Less involvement of the sample individuals in the selection of work activities was reported generally. On the whole, employers dictated job tasks with some room for negotiation. Staff identified four individuals in Project 1, three in Project 2 and only one from Project 3 to have participated in the selection of their work activities. For example, an individual in Project 1 was said to have selected the work environment because his workplace preferences had been discussed and the job seemed to fit these, but he had not participated in the selection of work tasks because:

"The job had been negotiated first and matched to his interests. It was then discussed with him what the task involved and he agreed. If he hadn't been interested he would not have been put forward for interview."

An individual in Project 2 had been involved in selecting the work environment although the worker concerned commented: *"she hasn't had a lot of choice it must be said."* The job match did not reflect her stated preference for working with children on the basis of a DEA's assessment following an incident during a work placement. Individuals from Project 3 were the least involved in selecting work environments although it was stated those individuals' *"feelings will be considered"*, and they were rarely involved in the selection of work tasks:

"Duties will be laid down, the trainer will ask if he wants to do it and assess if he is able to do the job."

'Quality' of the Job Match

The 'quality' of job matches can be evaluated by comparing individual preferences against jobs secured. Project workers were asked in respect of each individual, his/her opinion of the quality of the 'job match'. In the majority of cases (that is, 13 out of 18), staff were confident that 'reasonable' job matches had been achieved. Four out of six of the jobs found by Project 1 were judged to be reasonable matches, on the grounds that the person had been matched with the specific type of work they were looking for, or because the job matched well with the person's stated interests, skills or preferred workplace environment. The two that were not, were because the key factor had been that the individual had been waiting for a suitable job for some time, although staff stated that it had *"not been for want of trying to find suitable jobs"*. For one of these individuals, it seemed to be everyone's opinion, including the individual concerned, that it was most important to gain work experience in a paid job, regardless of the type of work:

"It was his choice to take the job. He knows it's not the one he wanted. We all have to build up and be realistic in our careers. He'll possibly be able to move onto his perfect job with experience."

Project 2 workers considered five out of seven jobs reasonable matches. To add another dimension to this, some jobs were considered reasonable matches even when the job clearly did not match an individual's specific job preference(s), casting doubt on the value of paying close attention to stated aspirations. The following comment illustrates:

"It's not what he wanted to do, but they offered him the job and he was happy to take it."

The challenges involved in determining individual preferences, given the limited work experience of people with learning disabilities, were highlighted. In the final analysis, Project 2 workers felt they also had to rely on their own professional judgment as to what might be suitable for an individual from experience of placing other people in jobs:

Given his learning disability we felt he would have to have a manageable task for his ability."

Sometimes there appeared to be no, or inconclusive information, forthcoming from the person to guide the direction of job finding. However, even when individual preferences were gleaned there was a tendency to rely on professional expertise. The following quotation illustrates how at times it appeared that individuals were 'guided' along a particular path based upon professionals' preconceived ideas:

"When I asked for her preferences I got "don't know", then "acting", then "hairdressing". When we started to look at preferences through structured questioning ... (it) reflected how little she had thought about and had guidance in types of work...I could have second guessed on meeting her what kind of job she would like but I had to check this out better through questions about what kind of work she wanted to do and looking at her skills. She was most interested in farm work, kitchen jobs initially and from there, asking what would be your favourite job, she said shop work or working with children. We were confident that she would like the shop environment."

(Project 2 Worker)

Separating the tasks of job search and compiling vocational profiles to different workers in Project 2, resulted in some disagreements about the quality of the job match. One individual had not stated clearly a preference for a particular career direction and her reasons for wanting a job appeared related mostly to relieving boredom and ensuring that the task was 'manageable'. Her limited work experience had included working in a catering environment, and her 'dream job' was to work with children:

"I was dubious (about the job match) because she had worked in an old people's home before and I couldn't see her having a blether with the old folks. It might be difficult for her to participate. Her job interview did not go particularly well."

The member of staff who had undertaken the job search and who matched her into the job did not share the concerns above. It was further suggested that the employer had been persuaded to employ the individual more on the basis of a wage subsidy provided through SPS and the persuasiveness of a skilled job finder.

Four out of five matches were considered by Project 3 workers to be reasonable matches between the job and individuals' skills and abilities. A reasonable job match was judged to exist if the requirements of the job were deemed to match the skills of the student. To illustrate the predominant approach in Project 3, I offer this quotation in respect of what was considered a reasonable job match - *"It's as good as we're likely to get; she is capable of doing the job."* Emphasis was placed upon professional assessment:

"He seems to want to mix with other people. His feelings will be considered., He might not like the job. The trainer will ask if he wants to do it and assess if he is able to do it."

The challenge of determining meaningful job preferences was highlighted by Project 3 staff in a similar way to Project 2. Observations were offered which appeared somewhat dismissive of the idea that individuals with learning disabilities have valid dreams and aspirations. It suggests that the opinions and preferences of individuals with learning disabilities were not treated as seriously as those of staff:

"You cannot go by what the students say. It's like a Miss World Contest. They don't know what jobs are because they have limited experience. We don't lay great store by what people

say. They spend time in the job club identifying tasks involved in different jobs. We have found they have unrealistic ideas about jobs or their own abilities."

From the above, it is clear that the path from individual dreams to an appropriate job, especially in today's job market, is a somewhat convoluted one. Overall, the predominant approach of supported employment staff seems to be to match important aspects of the person's 'dream job' as best they can to the existing job market. However, there was also an indication of a less positive trend in supported employment of matching people into jobs with Project 3 exemplifying this approach.

Consumer Expectations of Supported Employment

A central preoccupation of the research study was to explore what people with learning disabilities, carers and supported employment staff expected from supported employment and to compare and contrast these perspectives. Definitions of 'expectation' state that it is the prospect of a future good; it describes what we anticipate will be the value of doing or having something. The literature on supported employment reviewed in chapters 1 and 3, highlights several anticipated positive outcomes including: a better quality of life; structure; status; income; the power of choice; the chance to contribute to society; connections with other people and positive self esteem.

Individuals were asked what they thought having a job would be like; while carers and project staff were asked what the likely outcomes would be for each person. Lists were made and comparison between the three types of participant was carried out. These lists were used during the second stage interviews 9-10 months later, to examine whether what they had looked forward to matched the experience. The categories were used to generate a set of photographic images which were used in the second interviews with people with learning disabilities, rather than presenting written lists of which more has been discussed in chapter 4.

Responses to these questions were grouped into seven main categories: vocational integration; financial gain; better social life; self-esteem; sense of purpose; skill acquisition; and status. The results are shown in Table 6 below. This was achieved initially through open coding the interview transcripts with all three types of participants, retrieving coded data and examining it for new themes. Although the coding enterprise was driven by concepts derived from the literature, the data closely followed the theoretical concepts. One person expected her situation to change for the better principally because she would be leaving the day centre where she had a difficult relationship with another client. This was so idiosyncratic that it was not coded separately.

Table 6: Number of Users, Carers and Project Staff Identifying Specific Expected Outcomes from Supported Employment at the First Stage Interviews

<i>SPECIFIC OUTCOME</i>	<i>Number of Users (N=18)</i>	<i>Number of Carers (N=16)</i>	<i>Number of Staff (N=18)</i>
Social Integration/Better Social Life	10	8	8
Financial Gain	8	4	7
Self Esteem	5	8	5
Sense of Purpose	4	7	5
Skill Acquisition	4	2	4
Status	4	6	4
Increasing Independence and Maturity	-	5	6

To eliminate potential false reporting the aggregation of responses did not include responses to prompts such as ‘do you think money is an important part of having a job?’ where the response elicited was a ‘yes’ only. Although such a response positively affirmed the theme, it was impossible to distinguish responses that were produced by the research interview situation from those that accurately reflected interviewees’ perceptions. Parallel analysis was undertaken of the interview transcripts with carers and supported employment workers. The objective of analysis was to identify where carers and workers mentioned the same kinds of outcome, and also where they emphasised different outcomes.

From the table above, it is clear that people with learning disabilities identified a range of expected outcomes from supported employment. All identified more than one outcome. However, the outcome most sought after was having opportunities to mix with other people and make friends through work. A related outcome identified by some, was that supported employment would enable them to have a better social life.

Almost equally important was the financial gain from having a job. Other anticipated outcomes correlate with those found in the professional literature: skill acquisition; and indirect or intrinsic benefits, such as improved self esteem and self confidence, a sense of purpose in life, and improved status as a ‘worker’ rather than a service user. Each of the seven outcome categories used in the above table are now explored in greater detail below by contrasting consumers’ views with the responses of carers and professionals.

Expected Outcome - Social Integration

Two of the expected outcomes identified by users have been considered together, that is, vocational integration and a better social life, under the category ‘social integration’ for the purposes of this analysis. Meeting other people at work and having a better social life were important outcomes

emphasised by people with learning disabilities, carers and supported employment workers alike. A significant aspiration for at least three individuals was that having a job would enable them to lead a 'normal life' alongside others in society. Working in integrated jobs conveyed a sense of normality with local employers and for some this was in marked contrast to the experience of traditional rehabilitation or sheltered employment:

"I wanted to get away from working totally with disabled people, I want to be part of the normal workforce, rather than where everybody is the same."

Research on supported employment in the UK (Bass & Drewett, 1996) also found that the chance to meet new people and make new friendships was a major reason for people entering supported employment. People with learning disabilities often spoke about how they expected to meet people through work and make new friends. This would be partly through having opportunities to mix with a greater variety of people, and partly through earning a wage and being able to afford to socialise more - *"meeting folk, also might be able to go out a bit more."*

Eight carers emphasised the importance of friendships with other people outside the family, as an important expectation of supported employment. Some were keen to help expand their son or daughter's social life as it currently revolved mainly around them and/or other members of the family: Having a job would potentially change this for the better:

"He just keeps saying oh for somebody to just sit down and have a normal conversation but it isn't just that. Even the job is only part of it; the social life is the other half. If one could counteract the other, if he was maybe meeting friends at work."

"More opportunities to meet people from completely different backgrounds and areas"

"If you have a job you build a circle of friends, you go out with your workmates socially."

Similarly project staff stressed the importance of "expanding social horizons" for eight individuals. They recognised the benefits to individuals from meeting other people at the workplace - *"A chance to meet new people who will like him."* They did not however perceive social integration to be a benefit arising from having extra income:

"It's like this for a lot of our students, it's not the money, it's more the social side of things. As far as they're concerned they've got a job, paid or not."
(Project 3 Worker)

Expected Outcome - Financial Gain

The benefits situation is one of the most commonly cited barriers hindering people with disabilities getting real jobs. There was evidence in this study that the risks were not any less for those in supported employment and the findings below show that the welfare benefits system had a significant

impact on the financial outcome for most people. Despite this it was the hope of eight people with learning disabilities that having a job would mean earning an income or gaining financially. This should not be surprising when we consider that it is 'normal' in a capitalist society to get paid for the work one does. The majority would be better off from working (that is, 13 out of 18 individuals), although often by only £15 per week, the limit of DSS benefits disregard. As a result of working within benefits disregard rules many of the sample would be working a limited number of hours as is shown in chapter 8.

Although several users expected to gain financially from working, some had been offered unpaid jobs or jobs at £15 or less per week:

"Well you get paid for it don't you? You work hard and get your money at the end of the day."

"You have to spend money if you want to go anywhere. At least you'll be able to lead a semi-decent life (in a job)"

"At least if you're working you're earning. You can go out and enjoy yourself, you can be more sociable with money in the back of your pocket."

In Project 1, the majority would be better off financially. One would remain in the same financial position even though his wages topped up with DWA amounted to more than he was receiving in benefits, principally through loss of other concessions, such as free school meals, council tax benefit and low rent payments any gains were cancelled out. The majority of clients from Project 2 would also be better off financially: two would receive subsidised wages through SPS, and four would be better off by £15 (the amount of benefits disregard). Financial information could not be obtained from staff about one client. Two students in Project 3 would be better off by only the benefits disregard amount, while for three there would be no change in their financial situation as they would be unpaid.

Some would therefore be 'better off' financially as a result of supported employment, although the reality ranged from an extra £5 per week to earning at least three times current benefit levels, as was the case with one individual from Project 1. It would be true to say therefore, that the expectation of being better off through supported employment would not be fully realised.

Having an income was the next most common consequence reported by supported employment staff and there was no difference between the staff of the three projects. This is a surprising finding given that different projects placed varying emphases on gaining an income from supported jobs. This was discussed more fully in the preceding chapter which looked at the meaning supported employment staff gave to the terms a 'real job'. The following comment was typical: *getting a weekly cheque and the joy of banking his money*" - although a comment from a worker from Project 3 betrays the underlying beliefs as to why its workers generally placed low value on securing paid jobs:

"Our students have learning disabilities and some do not understand they will never earn more than £15. Some would be equally happy if they had a club in the afternoon. A lot cannot make an informed choice about working 20 hours for £15. Some do not understand what £15 is."

For carers, the issue of financial benefits from supported employment was a more complex one to untangle. An equal number of carers identified that financial benefits were not important. The following represent typical comments:

"We never have been looking for her having employment with any reward. We would be very happy with voluntary work."
(Parents)

"The more she has the more she would just fritter away, so if she gets too much then we're never going to get her to realistically look at her budget."
(Residential Keyworker)

It seemed that carers were divided on the issue of payment for jobs. Seven carers were professionals or keyworkers of people living in some type of residential accommodation who would have been aware of the restrictions on individuals receiving DSS support for their accommodation. Significantly all made some comment about the benefits disincentives of working. Some parents were at pains to point out that financial rewards were either not important or were secondary to the expected intrinsic rewards of having a job, including increased self confidence, expanding social horizons or helping the person become independent. In fact, one parent definitely felt stigmatised as a result of encouraging her son to get a job:

"A lot of people think 'oh they're getting him out to work, it's money', but that's not the way I look at it really. For him yes, money is important but money never came into it for us, I would have been happy if it had been voluntary work, it wouldn't have bothered me."

Expected Outcome - Self Esteem

Five people with learning disabilities had specifically stated that they expected to feel better about themselves in some way as a result of having a job, or they expected to become more self-confident. For one individual improving his "state of mind" was the most important aspect of having a job, something that he prioritised above money:

"My reason for wanting a job was for my state of mind, I mean you've not got a job, you're lying in bed and your mind's just putrefied, you've nothing to do. Most of the time you spend in the house watching TV or sleeping."

Others stated:

"I'm hoping it (the job) will make me feel better."

"It (having a job) makes you feel good."

At the start of the study careful consideration had been given to measuring the concept of 'self esteem', and whether to use a standardised measure. On reflection I had decided not to use a specific measure as this seemed contrary to the nature of an essentially qualitative and exploratory study, and secondly, the measures that were available tended not to be suitable for use with people with learning disabilities. Other researchers, for example, Szivos (1993) who have used such measures have done so only with people with mild learning disabilities, and with mixed success.

Because the concept of self esteem is nonetheless an important one in any study of the outcomes of supported employment, the literature on self-esteem was utilised in drawing up questions which asked individuals to describe themselves and what they were like, how they felt about themselves, whether they were happy, whether they felt lonely, and what kind of person they felt they were. This provided an impressionistic self-assessment that I have equated with important aspects of self-esteem, but not defined as a measure of self-esteem. I was looking for general statements about whether people felt good about themselves, and whether they had a sense of control over their lives. Carers were also asked to give an assessment of the person's self esteem.

While some identified their general lack of confidence, individuals generally perceived themselves in positive ways:

"I'm basically a good person."

"I think I'm a nice person."

"I feel good about myself. I'm a happy man, very nice to get on with."

Only two people offered negative comments about their current state:

"I'm feeling pretty down about it all"

"It could be better"

Supported employment workers identified improved self-confidence and self-esteem as the expected outcome for five people. For reasons that are not entirely clear, self-esteem was not one of the expected outcomes directly referred to in respect of any of the study sample from Project 3.

For carers, increased self-esteem and self-worth, including regard for their relative or client (in the case of keyworkers) being happy, was an important hoped-for outcome which was identified by the same number of carers as identified social integration (eight carers) - *"I just want to see him happy, it's as simple as that."* indicating the importance placed by carers on the intrinsic benefits of working over wages. In one parent's eyes, becoming more confident and gaining self esteem through this job was felt to be the key to better kinds of jobs in the future which were *"a bit more enjoyable and*

perhaps more lucrative". It would be true to say that parents were more concerned than paid staff, with the well-being and happiness of their son or daughter.

Expected Outcome - Sense of Purpose

Going out to a job would clearly provide a different structure to daily life for many people with learning disabilities who had been denied this opportunity so far. This was identified as an expected outcome by seven carers, five staff, and four individuals with learning disabilities. For people with learning disabilities, having a job provided an opportunity to *"do something meaningful with my life."* Some individuals were clear about the benefits of having a structure to the day or week:

"I want to move into a job because you know what you'll be doing. Get up and go somewhere every day."

Parents often spoke about a lack of direction in their son's or daughter's life and anticipated positive change as a result of supported employment - *"it's a big thing for him because he gets bored easily"*. Similarly, supported employment staff spoke about supported employment providing a sought-after structure to daily life and a sense of purpose. Having a job would offer people with disabilities the opportunity to conform to the patterns of life of non-disabled others. This seemed to be highlighted particularly for the younger people in the sample, especially when others had noticed he or she had got into the habit of late night television and getting up late in the day: a pattern of life not dissimilar to other unemployed people, but one which can quite easily deteriorate into a negative spiral of low self-worth and low confidence.

The comments around the outcome of structure and purpose in life reflected not only a desire for patterns of life that were the same as others in society, but also for jobs with local employers. A 'sense of purpose' was inseparable from the value placed on a job with a local employer. This challenged the earlier Danish conceptualisation of normalisation that emphasised patterns of life that were ordinary but not social inclusion (Nirje 1985, 1980). It was not enough however, simply to replicate patterns of ordinary life, including working patterns, if this happened in settings separated from the rest of society. Some people in the sample who had experienced segregated or specialist employment, had gone to lengths to secure jobs with local employers, and were even prepared to compromise on the financial gains in order to experience integrated employment.

Expected Outcome - Status

An outcome that was rarely directly mentioned by people with learning disabilities (only four people) or project workers, was that of increased personal status from being a 'worker' as opposed to a recipient of services. However, one worker in Project 1 concluded that the most important outcome

for some individuals was the conferred status and self-identity they would develop as a worker, thus raising the person's value in both his/her own and other people's eyes.

For one individual the most important thing about having a job was wearing the company boiler suit. The sense of pride from wearing his work uniform on the bus to work conveyed an obvious personal pride in his new status as a working person, with the badge of this identity, the boiler suit, now marking him out as someone with a different status from before.

Another mentioned a difference in status gained from receiving a wage cheque compared to claiming unemployment benefits:

"I was wanting money, to be in the money, but since I've been signing on I didn't like that much."

It was not everyone who wanted a job for its extrinsic benefits, as was illustrated by two individuals who spoke of wanting to make a contribution to society:

"I want to be a caretaker in a community centre - meeting lots of people. I used to help a disabled group when I was there, folk in wheelchairs doing dishes for them and that. I really enjoyed that."

"Being a hospital porter you have to meet people and get on well with them. It's very important to make people feel at ease with you. Because they have so many people coming and through their lives while they are in the hospital you know, you can just even smile and say "how are you feeling today?" and it makes them feel better about the situation."

Gaining status and self-identity as a result of supported employment was something carers often alluded to in their responses. Six carers specifically mentioned the aspect of status and a sense of identity as a working person as an important expected outcome:

"She said the other day 'It's about time I was in work and earning some money'"

"Satisfaction at being able to say I've got a job and don't have to sign on the dole. He's dying to go down the job centre and tell them he's got a job"

"He will get all the normal things anyone gets out of being gainfully employed. Even last week, the change in him to be there when he got offered the job, even to give a reply seemed to give him a boost, but that's normal in most people when they're unemployed."

Related to this general theme was the effect a job would have on increasing independence and maturity. Exponents of normalisation emphasise that having a job confers adult status. This was particularly important to parents whose young son or daughter was still living at home. Five carers and six project workers spoke about their hopes that having a job would help mature the person, although interestingly no-one with learning disabilities identified with this outcome specifically. For some, carers thought there would be a direct link between the skills he/she was learning at work and

the improvement of independent living skills - *"If she's helping people and doing more domestic things at work, it must rub off at home."* The following quote illustrates in relation to the same individual above, that the general consensus among carers and staff was that a job would provide relevant opportunities for the person to mature:

"She will start to realise she's an adult and start behaving like a 21 year old woman instead of acting like a 12 or 13 year old."

During the interview with the project worker above, frequent reference was made to the individual's immature, age-inappropriate behaviour and personal presentation. It was an aspiration of staff that this would be positively affected by supported employment.

Expected Outcome - Skill Acquisition

Finally, skill acquisition was an outcome alluded to by very few people, who tended to refer to the chance to demonstrate they could do a job well and competently (four people with learning disabilities). This was the most important outcome expected by staff when a job match was not thought to constitute a reasonable match between an individual's career preferences and the tasks demanded by the job, or where it was known that the job was going to be unpaid work.

Most Important Outcomes

In addition to counting the number of people who identified particular outcomes, I had also asked consumers to rank in priority order the most important outcome. The greatest proportion of responses (five individuals), identified the financial outcome as the most important aspect of a job, a similar number felt that the opportunity to have a job with a local employer alongside non-disabled people was the most important aspect, making the contrast between supported employment and experiences of sheltered employment. The most important aspect to three was the social benefit of working; while two felt that having a sense of purpose in life was most important. One person identified positive self-esteem as most important and another felt that status as a worker was the most important. Three individuals could not prioritise an outcome as most important. Not surprisingly, one who was escaping from a relationship problem with another client at the day centre felt that being free of this was the most important benefit.

SUMMARY

The majority of the research sample was male, aged between 20-34 years, and the greatest proportion lived at home with parents and other siblings. An equal number of females lived at home as were living in institutional settings, while the males in the sample were more likely to live at home with family. In conclusion, it would seem that young men living at home benefited most from these supported employment services. Research has suggested that an imbalance between the sexes is either because men become labelled as learning disabled more readily than women or that rehabilitation and employment services generally are more concerned with maximising men's employment opportunities (Morris, 1994; Lister et al 1992).

The study acknowledges the complexity of categorising people as 'learning disabled' and the problem with labels. However, using the categories of learning disability adopted by the three projects, the majority of the sample was reported to be individuals with 'mild' to 'moderate' learning disability (17 individuals). This supported the findings of UK surveys of supported employment (Beyer et al, 1996b; Lister et al 1992), and trends reported by American supported employment researchers (Mank, 1996a; Albin et al, 1994; West et al, 1992b; Kregel & Wehman, 1989; Wehman P, 1988). In this respect, none of the projects were at the cutting edge of supported employment in targeting services at people considered to have more challenging support needs. Parent et al (1992b) criticised supported employment programmes as failing to focus on those who are most severely disabled and who require ongoing support possibly for the duration of their employment. These authors suggested that this *"negates a major supposition of supported employment and in fact is a perversion of the entire concept"* (page 3). Without exception, however, all the individuals in the research sample felt they required some kind of support to find and maintain themselves in jobs.

Traditionally, professionals working with people with learning disabilities have matched people along a continuum of services, with employment services at one end of the spectrum and specialist day centres or hospitals at the other. That the sample comprised mainly those said to have 'mild' to 'moderate' learning disabilities would support this assertion from chapter 1. Secondly, the primary emphasis of some funders on achieving high numbers of job placements, may have tempted supported employment services to focus efforts on those who they imagined would be most successful and hence reflect success for the project. Pressures from funders to demonstrate results in the short-term may have focused the attention of projects on the number of jobs found rather than the quality of those jobs.

At the outset, there was evidence that the emphases and operational practices of the three projects would affect individual outcomes. In Chapter 5, different planning processes were discussed and one of the main differences being in terms of individual planning practices. Those using Project 3 were ill

informed about the processes of supported employment and what to expect from it, including not understanding entitlement to paid jobs. The benefits of person-centred approaches, the achievement of user-empowerment and participation are being increasingly recognised in supported employment. Sadly, participation in the selection of work environments and work tasks was a missed opportunity for some supported employment users in this study. The potential for user-empowerment and choice through supported employment was less positive than might be expected. As Callahan & Bradley (1997, p22) recently commented:

"For many people with disabilities the notion of dreaming is too often considered to be inconsistent with the realities of rehabilitation and working."

Although there are challenges in gathering individual information about the aspirations of people with severe learning disabilities, especially when they lack a broad experience of work, evidence of its importance in job retention (Hagner & Dileo, 1993), highlights that more weight should be given to developing such approaches.

Translating the language of person-centred planning and turning 'dreams' into employment solutions was clearly challenging. One of the barriers to disabled people's employment identified in chapter 2 has been found to be the attitudes of others, including the attitudes of human service staff. A few jobs were a creative response to user-defined 'dream jobs', but this did not apply to many. Even less positive was evidence of an attitude that the views of people with learning disabilities were invariably 'unrealistic'. 'Dreams' and aspirations sometimes having to fit what professionals thought the job market dictated.

Research studies have shown that people with learning disabilities value mixing with non-disabled people and the opportunities to develop personal friendships and relationships offered in ordinary workplaces. This chapter has shown social integration as the outcome people with learning disabilities valued most from supported employment. The evidence suggests that employer negotiations did not systematically address identifying workplaces with the highest social integration potential. Several measures have been devised for this purpose including the VII used in this study, but none were currently in use in any of the projects, although Project 1 was considering adopting the VII as a spin-off from participating in the research. It would be true to say that assessing social integration potential was viewed as idealistic by professionals. Yet users and carers prioritised social integration. By not evaluating the social integration potential of specific jobs thoroughly enough, supported employment may not move beyond physical integration.

The second user-defined priority outcome was financial gain. The situation for people with disabilities entering employment was not helped by existing disincentives in the welfare benefits system, affecting the kinds of jobs offered and the level of remuneration sought. The benefits trap was clearly a major

barrier to the achievement of real paid jobs. If supported employment staff placed little value on securing paid jobs from the outset however, it was likely that the jobs found would be unpaid. Although in the preceding chapter, supported employment staff across all three projects highlighted payment as a key factor of a 'real job', this was not borne out by practice in Project 3: payment for work was generally not an expectation staff shared in this project. How different project emphases and expectations have affected the experience of supported employment will be discussed further in chapters 8 and 9.

CHAPTER 7:

ASPECTS OF QUALITY OF LIFE BEFORE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework for this study incorporated the concept of quality of life (see chapters 1 & 4). In short, emphasis was placed on exploring the subjective views of people with learning disabilities engaged in supported employment, rather than on collecting information for a pre-defined measure of quality of life. The literature review considered in earlier chapters suggested particular dimensions of quality of life to explore: choice and self-determination, social participation, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. These concepts initially directed the data collection effort and provide the framework for the contents of this chapter.

Qualitative interviews with all three types of participant (people with learning disabilities; carers; project staff), covered among other things, experiences of choice-making including the degree of choice in daily life and, in the context of supported employment, job choice. As Biklen and Knoll (1987) asserted, an holistic perspective is important in quality of life research: peoples' lives cannot be broken down into discrete boxes, the relationship between different elements of a person's life affects the quality of life overall. Social presence and social participation were explored through determining who were the important people, places and activities were in each person's life, their social networks and sources of social support. Asking direct questions about self-perception and individuals' life satisfaction assessed general levels of satisfaction with current lifestyles.

CHOICE & SELF DETERMINATION

Choice is one of the core principles of supported employment: the roots of supported employment are "*deeply entwined in consumer interests, choice and inclusion.*" (Brooke et al, 1992, p2). Indeed supported employment was created to ensure that those traditionally excluded from the workforce had choice, that of securing and maintaining a job. With the advent of community care, there is a great deal of policy and practice interest in the whole notion of choice, and a growing acceptance that people with disabilities have a right to individual self-determination and services which respect their individual choice. However, some writers (Priestley, 1999) have argued that although the ideas behind community care policy have begun to reflect values such as participation, integration, equality and

choice, current practice continues to exclude and limit the choices of people with disabilities by retaining its focus on individual pathology.

Self-determination refers to the attitudes (such as assertiveness, creativity, pride, self-advocacy) and abilities (such as problem-solving, being able to set goals and recognise consequences) required to make choices regarding one's quality of life free from undue external pressure or influence (Wehmeyer, 1992). In order to take control and be self-determining, there must be opportunities to make choices and receive the necessary supports. As Weymeyer (1996) describes it, there is an almost 'intuitively evident' link between increased opportunities to make choices and take more control over one's life, and enhanced quality of life. Similarly Cattermole et al (1990) found that having the opportunity to make choices, was one of the most important factors in determining individuals' perceptions of the quality of their lives.

Researchers have suggested that people with learning disabilities traditionally experience fewer life choices, and have restricted access to a range of activities compared to other people, and consequently have fewer opportunities to be self-determining (Wehmeyer & Metzler, 1995). Also, other people often restrict these opportunities (Stalker & Harris, 1998). When the opportunity is offered, it is linked to the relative importance (ascribed by others) of the decision, for example they are more likely to have some choice in buying clothes, but less in weightier decisions about choosing where to live or consenting to medical procedures (Wehmeyer & Metzler, 1995). As a group, people with learning disabilities are extremely vulnerable to the influence of others (Guess et al, 1985).

There are specific issues relating to choice afforded through participating in supported employment itself. However, previous research suggested there might be differences in the degree of choice and self-determination exercised in daily life according to living situation, and as a corollary to that, for the potential for supported employment to positively affect choice. Questions were therefore directed at the following: whether the individual decided when to go out and what time to come in, whether they could choose what clothes to buy and wear, whether or not they determined what time to go to bed and when to get up, whether they decided how to spend personal money, whom they spent time with, and practical issues such as whether they possessed a front door and/or bedroom key.

Choices in Daily Living

As expected, the degree of decision-making and choice experienced in daily life was found to be related to support; that is, other people (parents, paid staff, spouses) had a high degree of control over the options from which people could make choices, and the support available to make decisions about their lives on matters both big and small. As Stalker & Harris (1998) have argued, making choices is

inhibited by a range of factors, in particular the beliefs and attitudes of support staff. The following quotation from one of the interviews with a residential keyworker substantiates this claim:

"There are only so many choices you can give him. You give them the choices to the best of their ability what they can cope with."
(Residential keyworker)

As a whole, the individuals living with parents and siblings had greater self-determination and control over the patterns of daily living, although it was not the case for everyone. Some individuals were effectively 'institutionalised' at home, while others exercised maximum control over decision-making. Independent choice was sometimes accepted with unease:

"He makes positive choices all right, whether you agree with him or not is a different matter."

The one married individual in the study felt he had autonomy over the decisions in his life, but epitomised how decision-making happens within a context of responsibility to, and for, those one lives with, including one's husband or wife, children, parents and other family members, and in the case of those living in residential settings, other residents and paid staff. The following paragraphs outline in greater detail the main themes that emerged from interviews regarding important dimensions of choice.

Having A Front-Door Key

Having a front-door key is an accepted symbol of independence in adulthood. In the interviews, individuals were asked whether they possessed a front-door key. Only one person living at home did not, and the reason was that she had lost it and, being on Income Support, could not afford another. Not surprisingly therefore, in terms of having a choice of when to go out and when to come home, individuals living at home with family (parents and/or siblings), or living independently, had a greater degree of freedom than those living in residential care settings, although individual situations varied.

In contrast, out of the seven people living in either a hostel, hospital or group home, only two had front-door keys: staff blamed this on fire safety regulations. The one individual living in a hospital at the start of the research had neither a front door nor bedroom key: his only key was a locker key. Five people living in residential settings had bedroom keys, which contrasted sharply with individuals living in the community, none of whom had bedroom keys. Those living with families or on their own met the question 'Do you have a bedroom key' with puzzlement.

Choosing When to Go to Bed and When to Get Up

The individuals living in hostels and group homes felt they had a significant degree of control over the time they went to bed and got up in the morning: on the whole, arrangements were flexible, with staff supporting individuals' right to choose what hours they kept. There was only one individual who felt she could not choose what time to go to bed or get up, except at weekends when there was a greater degree of flexibility. A variety of arrangements for waking existed, from receiving a wake-up call to using an alarm clock. Individuals who were living on their own or in supported living situations were able to exercise most control over the daily patterns of life.

Different patterns emerged for people living at home with parents, some offering maximum potential for independence and others much less so. The degree to which someone could be institutionalised in his/her living patterns was thus not specifically linked to institutional settings. Patterns of family life could also be institutionalised: for example, Joe, 32 years old, who lived with his parents, spent most of his time in their company and rose every morning at 7:30 a.m. because that was the time his father rose for work, and went to bed at the same time as his parents. He was said to "*thrive on routine*" (mother) and he passively described himself as "*very easy going*".

Buying Clothes

On the whole living in a hostel or other staffed residence meant that staff had a significant say in this area. Some individuals felt staff supported them to make independent decisions about clothes, while others clearly had little choice. A discrepancy between one individual's account - "*staff buy them, I go as well.*" - and the residential keyworker's, who stated that this same individual bought clothes "*with help from staff*", illustrates this point. Preoccupation with outward appearances generally was detected from frequent comments around the 'inappropriateness' of residents' own choice in clothes.

With regard to how living at home affected the opportunity to choose one's clothes, making a choice about clothes was found to be more gender-related: females living at home with parents, and some of the females living in supported living exercised choice and were able to impose their own ideas of style. In contrast, other people (typically mothers) decided what males with learning disabilities should wear. Three males living at home indicated that it seemed normal to them that their mothers should choose what they wore. His mother described one as a 'typical male' and indeed this does fit with a societal norm.

Personal Money/'Pocket Money'

The aspect of daily life over which people with learning disabilities had least control was their money. Bewley (1997) found that people with learning disabilities across the UK did not have access to much money in the first place. For those living at home, individual welfare benefits and money can be viewed as belonging to the family as a whole. It was typical for those living in hostels and group homes to have personal money kept in a safe and/or bank accounts, whose access was controlled by staff. Although in many situations there was clearly freedom of access to personal funds, this was always controlled by staff, who had the power to veto spending decisions. Staff and people with learning disabilities often referred to personal money as 'pocket money'. The reason one man referred to his money in this way was *"because everyone else does!"* One residential keyworker said:

"He keeps his money in the safe. We will allow him to have whatever he wants. He just asks."

In respect of choosing how to spend money and how much money one should hold, individuals living with parents had similar restrictions placed upon them. Living off disability benefits or Income Support was restricting in itself and limited finances were often cited as the main cause of limited social lives. Parents provided help to manage money ranging from complete control and the issuing of pocket money, to supporting the individual to budget and manage their own money. Money management was a problematic aspect of the relationship between people with learning disabilities and their parents, causing stress and worry when the individual concerned was not managing money well:

"It wears you down, it's been going on for years and years. Sometimes he's taken too much out of the bank and has to go short the next week."

Parents management of individuals' money was more often than not motivated by the desire to protect their son or daughter from exploitation. The assumption therefore that people with disabilities have a propensity to be exploited by others financially, tends to reinforce the need for control. It seemed doubtful that the potential for extra earnings through work would increase the choices of all supported employees, unless existing arrangements for managing personal money, or the person's living circumstances were to change radically.

Choice of Friends

All the individuals living in residential settings felt they made positive choices about whom they should spent time with. However, this should not be divorced from what has been said about the restrictions on independence as this clearly has an impact on the practicalities of supporting friendships. As Walker (1995) argued, relationships and the nature of the places one goes, and whether they offer opportunities for social interaction and mixing, are again constrained by others.

Some of those living in hostels shared a room with another person, which in itself had implications for privacy. Most of those living in residential settings did not possess a front-door key, and others invariably controlled access to personal money.

How much choice did individuals have about whom they went on holiday with and where to go on holiday? Those living in residential settings generally went on holiday with other residents and staff. Just two individuals, one living in a hostel, the other in a group home, made independent arrangements to stay with distant relatives during summer or other major holidays such as Christmas. One person living in a hostel perceived himself as having no choice about holidays - *"Staff tell us where we've to go - Blackpool, Skegness or Butlins"*. Apart from this isolated experience in one local authority hostel, residential staff generally seemed to be presenting comprehensive information on a range of holiday destinations and to be supporting informed choices. What individuals frequently had little choice about, however, was whom they went on holiday with, particularly if one considers that they had not initially chosen those with whom they lived in the hostel, or the staff that supported them.

Two individuals living at home said they could not afford to go on holiday, although other members of the family were going away. Three others who were going on holiday with parents were happy to accept their parents' choice of holiday destination and for them to make the necessary arrangements. Although seemingly passive, this was experienced as a positive choice by the individuals concerned: a significant factor would seem to be the strength of relationship and trust:

"My mum and dad decide. My sister and me have nothing to do with that, it's them... I was on holiday with my mum and dad last year in September in Tenerife. It was really good, really enjoyed it, it was brilliant."

"They ask me and I say Spain and they might say well, because they know I need something to do and so they say right we'll do that then, whether they like it or not. I think they ken I like it, I've been to this place in Spain, Benidorm and I liked it there before but I think my mum would rather go to a different part of Spain, but I think she kens I liked it so we'll probably go back there in the summer."

As a general rule, those living at home were able to choose whom they spent their time with, although as will be shown later, the isolation imposed by unemployment often meant that circles of friends were small, and social networks mainly comprised close family members and paid supporters. The parents of one young woman had become aware that their twenty-one year-old daughter was spending most of her social time accompanying them when they went out with their friends. Having assessed the risks in leaving her home alone, they had begun to do so. Another parent was protective of his daughter:

"We sometimes make fairly conscious decisions that one or two individuals are not quite for her. There's always a few boys phone and we just sort of put them off."

Job Choice in Supported Employment

Choice is a key element of supporting individuals with learning disabilities to secure jobs. Fifteen individuals (over 80%) answered positively that in their view they had made the decision to take the job offered. The choice presented however, was invariably between whether to take one specific job offer or not. That so many people answered in the positive is impressive. Other research presents contradictory findings: for example, Wehmeyer & Metzler (1995) undertaking a national survey in the USA of people with learning disabilities and self-determination, found that 56% of their study sample did not choose their current job or day activity. A consumer satisfaction survey of supported employees (Parent, 1996) found the majority of consumers were satisfied with their job and many felt that they would not be working without the help of supported employment.

In short, the reality of job choice typically meant take the job or leave it, and individuals were forced to make compromises in their expectations and aspirations (see previous chapter). It was rare that a choice could be offered between different work options. The following quotation from one of the interviewees illustrates this point:

"It was just a job and he offered me it. I just went 'oh I could maybe manage that', and so I went and had a look at the place and seen what was involved and everything."

This was reinforced by the opinion of this individual's parent who commented:

"He was offered it and I think he just felt that he was gonna take something you know, anything. I mean he really still wants to work in an office."

An interesting point raised by a parent concerned how job choice related only to the geographical area covered by the supported employment project, whilst it was normal for other people to commute to the nearby City for jobs. Although a unique point of view, this certainly raised an issue that challenges the notion of flexibility for supported employment provision:

"She doesn't have a choice of area. She would have been happy to commute but it's outwith the project's area. Many other people commute to the City every day so why should it be any different for her?"

From this brief picture, it can be seen that the parameters of choice-making and self-determination for people with learning disabilities in the sample were largely determined by the people who supported them and were closest to them. The issue of job choice was again influenced by the attitudes of other people, the employment specialists, as well as the dictates of the local employment situation. The issue for this research then was whether, and in what ways, the experience of supported employment would change existing parameters of choice.

COMMUNITY PRESENCE & PARTICIPATION

Earlier chapters, in particular chapters 1 and 3, have shown how supported employment is fundamentally associated with the notion of social integration. In this context social integration is defined as, not only the physical presence in ordinary workplaces, but also the inclusion and acceptance of people with learning disabilities in the settings and lives of non-disabled people. O'Brien (1987) and O'Brien & Tyne (1981) define community integration as two distinct concepts: 1) community presence, that is being present in ordinary workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods; and 2) community participation that refers to connection and involvement with others in ordinary places. This study sought to explore whether supported employment increased opportunities not only for community presence through jobs in ordinary local workplaces, but also for community participation through mixing with non-disabled people both at work and outside of work.

Although there has been a discourse about the importance of community integration and participation, there has been less analysis of what is meant by 'community'. Community can be defined in many different ways but there is now widespread agreement that 'community' is not just about physical place (Walker, 1995). Community is depicted in terms of friendships and relationships between people, essentially as about feelings of belonging and personal meanings (O'Brien & O'Brien, 1993; Pearpoint et al, 1993). Researchers have found relationships to be a major determinant in the quality of life of people with learning disabilities (Richardson & Ritchie, 1989; Atkinson & Ward, 1987), particularly with non-disabled people (Atkinson, 1986; Edgerton 1967). Increasingly researchers in this area have emphasised the notion of 'intentional community' (Falvey et al, 1994; Pearpoint et al, 1993), that is, the need for positive interventions to promote friendships in integrated settings.

The quality of life perspective of this study demanded an examination of community inclusion, as well as vocational integration. A fundamental issue for the research therefore, was the attempt to understand the meaning of workplace relationships in the context of daily life, and the efforts made by employment specialists to promote friendships at work. Community integration before supported employment is explored through two specific discourses: the first considers aspects of social networks, and the second, the sources and nature of social support.

Social Networks

"Networks are...the web of identified social relationships that surround an individual and the characteristics of those linkages. It is the set of people with whom one maintains contact and has some form of social bond"
(Bowling, 1991, page 120)

Exploring social networks means understanding an individual's world from his/her perspective, specifically the people, places and activities that are important to him/her (Seed, 1990). Increasing the number of people with whom individuals with learning disabilities have contact through engagement in local jobs is believed to increase the range of people who may be able to offer help when needed, or social support and friendship. Social networks link the people with whom one has some form of contact in the course of everyday living, and describes the framework within which potential sources of support can be found.

Studies focusing on the social networks of people with learning disabilities living at home have generally found that social contact is limited to other people with disabilities at day centres or special clubs, or to parents' friends (Todd et al, 1990; Richardson & Ritchie, 1989), suggesting that they are often engaged in separate or 'special' activities. Moving from long stay-hospital into the community frequently results in expanding the range of activities or social geography (Walker, 1995), although this does not necessarily mean change in the composition or size of the person's social network (Walker, 1995; Emerson & Hatton, 1995; Edgerton, 1967).

Murphy (1992), Flynn and Hirst (1992) and Jahoda et al (1990) reported that people with learning disabilities generally experience social isolation and had limited access to a range of experiences. Social integration has been one of the most problematic areas for supported employment researchers to measure but one that has come increasingly under the spotlight. There is conflicting evidence: some commentators argue that supported employment has led to richer social lives (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Callahan & Garner, 1997; Wertheimer 1992a; McLoughlin et al, 1987), while others suggest it has meant little or no opportunity to extend social relationships (Knox & Parmenter, 1993).

Framework for Exploring Social Networks

In examining social networks in this study, three approaches to reflecting upon and interpreting changes in social networks were referenced: Seed (1990) who had explored the features, types and relational qualities of networks; Jahoda et al's (1990) work categorising activities according to integration potential; and Walker (1995) who distinguished between public and private activities, and between activities that take place in locations characterised by social anonymity and those characterised by social interaction and connection to community.

The interviews before starting employment covered regular activities, interests, hobbies, places and people in the participants' lives. I also asked for a self-assessment of their current social lives. Interview transcripts for each individual were read several times to identify the number and different types of activities, the places and the people involved. Carer and project worker interviews supplemented this information and became part of an additive process to ensure a more rounded

picture of an individual's social life. Networks have been examined in terms of 1) composition, who was in the social network; 2) activities, what types of activities were involved and where they took place; and 3) network types.

(1) Composition of Social Networks

The literature review presented in earlier chapters suggested that social segregation characterises the experiences of the majority of people with learning disabilities, and that their presence in the community depends to a large extent upon the availability of someone to accompany them. Although impossible to count the numbers of people involved in each person's life in a meaningful way, particularly when non-specific reference was made to 'other residents', 'other people who go to the day centre', and a generic category of 'staff,' it was possible to look at the relative involvement of five types of supporters: relatives (particularly parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews); paid or professional staff; other people with learning disabilities; non-disabled friends; and non-disabled acquaintances, and to make general statements about network size.

A distinction was drawn between friends and acquaintances on the basis of interview information, indicating how well the person was known. For instance, were they known by name and were they involved outwith the context referred to? Acquaintances might be people one regularly sees in a pub, although there tends to be no other involvement beyond being 'friendly' in that setting. The types of supporters involved in the lives of those in residential settings were compared with those who were involved in the lives of those living with family or by themselves.

The social networks of all seven people who lived in some form of residential provision predominantly consisted of other people with learning disabilities who were co-residents or attended the same day programme or special club, paid staff, and lastly, relatives. Two individuals saw relatives (parents or a sibling), on a regular basis, while contact with family for the other five people was restricted to major events like Christmas, New Year and birthdays. Relationships with relatives who lived a distance away, were even less frequent. Non-disabled acquaintances did feature in the networks of some people living in residential settings. Commonly these were people at a local pub or ordinary club, personnel of a bus company with whom one person regularly travelled, and people who were regularly seen and greeted outside the hostel. Neighbours were only mentioned by one man who spent some of his time in the street outside the hostel enjoying conversations with a wide range of passers-by.

The social networks of people who were living at home with family were comprised predominantly of family: five lived at home with parents and siblings, one only with his father, and three others with both parents. A diverse range of relatives was included in their social networks. It was common to regularly visit and be visited by grandparents (particularly grandmothers), aunts and uncles, nieces and

nephews. Those who only lived with parents tended to also visit and be visited by, other siblings and their families. Other than the involvement of professional staff like social workers and community psychiatric nurses, family were the main supporters in two people's networks. Both were involved in activities that mainly took place around the home: for example, watching TV or videos, listening to music, and reading newspapers. Neither attended any day centre or special clubs and as a result they had no other people with learning disabilities or non-disabled friends in their social networks.

Other people with learning disabilities as friends still featured in the social networks of five people living at home with family. Such friendships had formed through mixing at special clubs. Two females in the sample participated in the same keep-fit dance class that was organised for people with disabilities and had several friends and acquaintances in common while others met people with learning disabilities in special needs classes at college or by attending a day centre. More unusually, two individuals had only non-disabled friends.

Non-disabled acquaintances featured in the social networks of five individuals who were living at home, whom they met through church groups, girl guides, and/or going to a local pub or club regularly. Church events provided significant opportunities for social interaction with non-disabled people, although it was not always social contact with people of similar age, and therefore might not offer much opportunity for developing friendships. Three people had some contact with neighbours; one person occasionally collected shopping for a neighbour.

All in all, the presence of non-disabled people in the social networks of the sample individuals was low, although non-disabled friends and acquaintances were undoubtedly more common in the networks of those living in the community. Atkinson (1986) concluded that people with learning disabilities do not so much lack friends as lack non-disabled friends. Outside family however, there was little or no access to the homes of friends or neighbours. The strongest connections for people living in residential settings were with other people with learning disabilities and paid supporters. Because people who lived with their families also sometimes participated in special clubs or went to day centres, some of their friends had learning disabilities.

Family connections, exclusively for a few, predominated in the social networks of those living with family, in contrast to those in residential settings. If the family generally was isolated from neighbours and other community members, the person's network was also limited. Where families were more outgoing, an extensive network of extended relatives and friends existed. Thus, living in the community of itself did not guarantee sufficient opportunity to develop a sense of community membership. Such a sense could be either inhibited or encouraged by the family's outlook. Community connections were strongest for the one married individual living with his wife and two young children. In-laws and connections through the children as well as his own family members,

neighbours and non-disabled acquaintances with whom he socialised at the local pub, enriched his network. One of his neighbours occasionally allowed use of their car to allow the family to shop at the supermarket. Professionals and other people with learning disabilities still featured in his network, as a consequence of previous employment in a segregated workshop and specialist support related to his epilepsy. The one individual living on his own contrasted sharply with this picture, as his sole family contact was with his mother, and the only other people he mixed with were people with learning disabilities and hospital staff at the special hospital unit he attended.

Access to financial resources was an important determinant of the degree of social participation, as was the capacity for independent travel. However, clearly the attitudes of family members, and of residential staff served to restrict or support participation in activities and places where there was a chance of social interaction. Who is in one's social network clearly affects the scope of activities one engages in, as well as who is available to turn to for support. Interest connections were not much in evidence for the majority, apart from interests promoted by church groups. In the next section I will look at the activities individuals engaged in, comment on the extent to which the social geography of people's lives was determined by the presence of other people, family members or professionals and develop a typology of the social networks as a collective description.

(2) Activities & Locations

As with the composition and size of social networks discussed above, the scope of activities and different locations could be compared and contrasted. Jahoda et al (1990) classified activities in terms of their potential for integration. Drawing on this and Walker's (1995) distinction between public and private places, I developed a simple classification system taking account of the type of activity, where it took place, and by making a judgment about its potential for social integration based primarily on Jahoda et al's (1990) work.

Activities that were specially arranged for people with learning disabilities in both separate and ordinary places were defined as 'special'. Although community-based services have been found to offer improvements in community presence, the use of community facilities may still offer little or no contact with non-disabled people if the activity has been specifically organised for groups of people with learning disabilities (Lowe & De Pavia, 1991). For example, a disabled sports activity that involves using a community sports facility that has been organised specially for a group of people with learning disabilities at a specific time each week, or a special education class for people with learning disabilities in a further education college has been classed as 'special'. Activities taking place in segregated settings such as a hospital dance or social club organised only for people with learning disabilities meeting in a church hall were classed as 'special' activities.

A second category of activities consisting of ordinary activities that took place in private settings including the person's home, the home of another relative or close friend have been classed as 'isolated'. These activities typically included listening to music, watching TV, being visited by and visiting relatives. All these activities offered little, if any, opportunity to meet and mix with non-disabled people outside of a very close circle of family or friends and human service professionals. This equated with Jahoda et al's (1990) category of 'ordinary' activities.

The presence of people with disabilities in community settings is often taken as a basis for judging social integration (Emerson & Hatton, 1994). The third category of activities labelled as 'public' activities compares with Jahoda et al's (1990) 'semi-integrative' activities and includes those offering some social contact with non-disabled people in ordinary or public places such as shopping centres, cafes, churches, and parks. Although these were activities that took place in integrative settings, they were significantly in public places characterised by autonomy and offering limited opportunities for making personal connections (Walker, 1995).

A fourth category that I called 'socially-integrative' activities were those which seemed to have the most integrative potential because these offered most opportunities for interacting with and forming relationships with non-disabled people. This category included socialising in local pubs with non-disabled friends and acquaintances, going to regular social clubs, and belonging to a church group. For each individual, a list of all the activities he/she engaged in was made and each activity was assigned to one of the four categories: special, isolated, public or socially integrated. The number of activities in each category was calculated, totals summed, and an average calculated to investigate patterns in the data. Comparisons were made between those living in residential settings and those living at home or on their own.

I would like to add one caveat at this point, acknowledging the limitations of such classifications in capturing the essence of individuals' social lives: it is understood that potential for social integration is not only affected by the type of activity and /or the setting engaged in, but will also be affected by individual personality (not explored by this study), and individual characteristics such as age and sex. For example, church organisations emerged as important socially-integrative activities for several people. However, there were significant differences in respect of what this meant for the individual. For instance, Sally was 21 years old and was helping out at Sunday School. On the face of it she had plenty of opportunity for mixing with other helpers who were non-handicapped people, as well as with the children and their families. However, she was quite a shy person and the other helpers were all married women mostly with children with whom Sally's mum felt Sally had little in common. Consequently Sally did not consider any of her contacts at Sunday School amongst her friends. In contrast, Jenny, also 21 years-old, was involved with various social groups through her church,

including a youth group and had several people whom she considered among her friends from these groups.

Over one hundred different activities were identified. Individuals in the group were generally engaged with an average of 11 different activities each, although this masks significant individual variation in the number and pattern of activities, and the potential for integration offered by activities. For example, two people living at home were engaged in 16 different activities, while one person living at home was engaged in just seven activities. The most activities an individual living in residential care was engaged in was 13 and the least were six activities. Few of those living in residential settings reported any relatives or friends visiting them at the hostel or group home, although individuals did arrange to visit their relatives' and friends' homes. Another difference was that no one in residential settings reported speaking on the telephone to friends or relatives, nor playing on a computer. Dog walking was also a common activity reported by individuals living at home, but not those in residential settings.

Each of the four categories is now looked at in turn to assess general patterns of activities across the sample population. Under each category I have attempted to present brief vignettes that illustrate key points. In short, on average each person was engaged in 11 different activities: isolated activities were the most common (average = 4.5), followed by public activities (average = 3), special (average = 2) and lastly, socially-integrative activities (average = 1.6).

(a) Special Activities

Bob lived in a hospital at the start of the research and spent most of his time in the company of other people with learning disabilities and professional staff. He occasionally visited his mother and other siblings and stayed with her some weekends. Most of his activities were specially organised for people with learning disabilities by the hospital or other professionals. He had many different types of sporting opportunity including football, swimming and horse riding, all activities that happened through special clubs and events organised for people with learning disabilities. The hospital organised lots of different recreational activities such as barbecues, plays, football matches, hill walking and holidays. Bob was a helper at a horse-riding club for physically disabled people, as were others who stayed in the hospital. As a result he was mostly dependent on formal carers for support.

John was the only married individual in the sample and lived with his wife and two children. His social network was predominantly family-based but he could rely on a fairly extensive network of non-disabled friends and acquaintances, including neighbours. He was involved in a broad range of family-based and interest-based activities but special activities also

formed a significant part of his life. He was attending a special needs course at the local college and saw a professional counsellor regularly to advise him on how to manage his epilepsy. There was also a regular club commitment to a special club for people suffering from epilepsy.

Although special activities have been identified in the lives of the two individuals above, some differences are obvious: Bob's life at that moment was characterised by special activities organised by professionals for people with learning disabilities, while John on the other hand, who also was involved in segregated activities, had a more rounded experience overall on account of living with his own family. He still however, had to rely on segregated services to meet some of his needs. Taken as a whole, the lives of the individuals in the study sample were not dominated by special activities for people with learning disabilities: the average number of activities in this category was just two. This tended to be higher for those living in residential care settings (average= 3.3) than those living at home (average=0.8).

In the previous section it was also noted that those living in residential care settings (including group living arrangements), had a higher proportion of friends with learning disabilities and paid staff in their social networks. The kinds of special activities they were engaged in with other people with learning disabilities included disabled sports events, attending day centres, participating in an ENABLE Committee, horse riding for the disabled, and special college classes. On the positive side, the kinds of special activities organised through day centres and other groups offered people with learning disabilities opportunities to participate in a wide range of sports (including skiing), arts and crafts (pottery, painting) and to get extra support (epilepsy counselling). On the negative side these types of activities offered no opportunity to expand the scope of social networks, and thus contributed to keeping the lives of people with learning disabilities separate and distinct from the rest of the community.

(b) Isolated Activities

Chrys lived in a group home with three other people. She travelled independently and managed her own affairs to a large extent, and also those of the household. She was a keen baker and a talented embroiderer and was interested in anything to do with arts and crafts. Such activities were organised around the home. In addition to this, she spent her time watching TV and films, and doing housework. On the whole Chrys busied herself around the home or at her voluntary work placement.

For Chrys as all participants, the greatest proportion of her time was taken up with isolated activities; that is those activities that took place at home or the home of a friend or relative and involved people

from the close circle of family, other friends with learning disabilities and paid supporters: the average number was 4.5 isolated activities. These were activities that offered no potential for mixing with and meeting new people outside of an existing social network, which in view of the limited scope of the networks was cause for concern. Isolated activities consisted of having relatives to visit or going to a relative's home, watching TV and videos, listening to music, doing the housework, cooking, baby-sitting, talking on the telephone to friends and family and decorating the house. Although isolated activities for people living at home with family meant activities that took place both at home or the home of a friend or relative, for people living in hostels or group homes this commonly only referred to activities taking place in their own immediate environment. The most common form of recreation for all participants was TV and video viewing at home.

(c) Public Activities

Sally didn't go out much. She was very short of money. She saw herself as unemployed and spent a lot of her time checking the job adverts of the local Job Centre and scanning the newspapers for jobs. She sometimes went alone and sometimes with her sister into town to window shop. With her family, mother and father, two sisters and a brother she went to church on Sunday. She helped out at the Sunday School. Very occasionally she would go for lunch with her friend and they would go into town, or she would go swimming at the local baths. Most of the things she wanted to do she felt were not possible because she didn't have enough money. Sally did not participate in any special activities. Her activities took place predominately in public places, which meant that although she came into contact with non-disabled people, there were few opportunities to interact personally and make new friends. She often felt isolated and lonely.

Although on the face of it Sally lived a 'normal' life, in that it was not characterised by special activities that marked her out as different from other people, the reality was that she felt isolated and lonely. Activities that occurred in ordinary settings in the community were the second commonest type of activity: the average number was three public activities. Individuals living in residential settings tended to be less visible in their communities (average 2.3 public activities) compared to those living at home (average 3.7 public activities). Those who were living with family or were independent therefore, were visible in their communities, as they frequented shops and cafes, travelled on buses, used local swimming pools and libraries, went to church, or went window shopping in town, and went to football matches, ice-skating, cinemas, theatres, walking locally with the dog, and played bingo at the community bingo hall. The degree of social contact and potential for making connections in these settings was limited however. This data seems to concur with Todd et al (1990) that people with learning disabilities in the sample had a public life that went beyond the confines of their homes, but due to the nature of the activities, the individuals concerned were 'more recognised than known'.

(d) Socially-Integrative Activities

Despite a life dominated by special activities (4 special activities compared to the sample average of 2), Tom still managed to engage in three different socially integrative activities. They all stemmed from his interest in music and previous connections in the community before he went to live in the hostel. He was well known at his local pubs where he often took part in the karaoke. Tom was also a regular attendee at a fan club where there were opportunities to get to know non-disabled people, although he didn't speak about any particular friends from there.

Bill lived at home with his parents and sister and had a very active social life, some of which relied upon his father to ensure there was someone looking out for him. His interest was ice hockey and as well as playing himself when he was younger, he enjoyed watching the game. As a member of a local club he had travelled around the UK with other members, including his father. As might be expected for someone in his early 20s, he also enjoyed going to nightclubs and local pubs with friends on more than one night a week. Bill had a girlfriend but they didn't go out together often because girlfriends were "too expensive". He went with his granny to the local bingo hall regularly and got to know several people there. In short, Bill was pretty well known in his neighbourhood.

Some individuals like Tom and Bill were regularly taking part in activities that seemed to be socially integrative, but overall these were the exception. Individuals were generally least involved in activities with high integrative potential: on average each individual was involved in just 1.6 socially integrative activities. Again this was highest for people living at home (average 2.1 activities) compared to those in residential settings (average of 1.3 socially integrative activities). The activities described as socially integrative included being active in church groups, as a member of a social club, going to a bingo hall regularly and getting to know people there, helping at a youth group, and enjoying the karaoke at the local pub. One individual frequently stood chatting to neighbours, local workers, and other regular passers-by outside the immediate vicinity of the hostel and considered this an effective recruiting ground for friends. He was able to mention several people by name that he had met in this way. Going to a local pub and becoming a regular was the most common form of socially integrative activity for all groups. It was also a male-dominated activity, which suggests that the females in the sample might have been more socially isolated.

(3) Network Types

A further way of looking at social networks is to describe them as types. Seed (1990) referred to network types as applying to more general features of a social network and included statements that could be made about the network as a whole. Social work knowledge has emphasised two key aspects (Seed, 1990) - whether the network is 'self-contained' that is, restricted to a tight circle of supporters which generally excludes others; or whether it is 'embracing', reaching out to embrace relationships with others outside the immediate network. Using a simple conceptualisation with the data, four main types of network could be discerned:

- * Service-based and self-contained
- * Service-based and embracing
- * Home-based and self-contained
- * Home-based and embracing

Applying these generalised categories to the networks of the 18 people in the sample, five could be described as service-based and self-contained; two as service-based and embracing; six as home-based and self-contained; and five as home-based and embracing. The balance within the two categories of service-based and home-based is what is most striking: there appeared to be a greater range of types of network amongst people living with their families than amongst those who were living in residential care. This would imply that residential settings were not enabling people with learning disabilities to be as involved in their communities as those living in families. Walker (1995) argued that social networks are affected by 1) the degree to which a person's family is connected or unconnected to extended family members, neighbours and others in the community; 2) the types and characteristics of the community places people go; and 3) the way support is provided by family members or staff which can have a significant effect if it promotes relationships with family members, staff and other people with disabilities rather than with other community members without disabilities. Although supported employment opportunities have the potential to increase social integration, the impact of the support from those with whom one lives plays a significant part in determining whether and how an experience such as supported employment actually impacts on social networks.

The second key aspect of exploring social networks is the extent of support received from members of one's network, and how well individuals felt supported to lead rich and diverse lives or lives of restricted opportunity. In the next section I will explore the relational aspects of social networks with reference to theories of social support.

Social Support

Social support is a conceptualisation covering the patterns or 'web' of social relationships in one's life, the characteristics of the relationships (Bowling, 1991, Seed 1990; Barrera, 1980), and the people with whom one maintains social contact and have some kind of social bond. This is expressed through many types of contact - going out together, or less directly by phone, letter or even email - and includes personal relationships with friends, family members, and neighbours. Each support network is unique and different. Support can take many different forms such as being a confidant for private or personal feelings, lending money, food or other resources, providing physical help or advice, being a source of praise and encouragement and/or being a companion/friend at social events.

Other people are often important in most people's lives and people with learning disabilities are no exception. However, their social networks are often less extensive and less robust than other people's (Sanderson et al, 1997; Atkinson & Ward, 1987). Knox & Parmenter (1993) found that the social networks and support mechanisms of supported employees lacked complexity, with major sources of support provided by the family and organisations catering for people with disabilities. People living independently may still rely on visiting professionals for significant social support, and contact with neighbours, instead of being supportive, can be negative in nature (Flynn, 1989).

Walker (1995) claimed that family or professional supporters have typically prescribed the social networks of people with learning disabilities for them. The idea of 'Circles of Friends' is based on the notion that friendship and support can be conceptualised as layers represented by concentric circles symbolising different levels of intensity, with the inner circles reserved for those people who provide intimacy (Forest & Pearpoint, 1992). It is based on an assumption that quality of life can be measured in part by the friendships in our lives and this is backed up by empirical research, and that a person's life can be improved by expanding the number of intimate friends.

As outlined in chapter 4 individuals were asked to identify whom they could turn to for help of various kinds. The same questions were asked again at follow-up interviews to assess change. Support was examined in terms of six main categories identified from the literature and these were used as prompts during interviews to focus discussion. The six areas were: private feelings, material aid, advice, positive feedback, physical or practical assistance, and socialising. These were adapted from the standardised measure known as the Arizona Social Support Inventory or ASSI (Bowling, 1991; Barrera, 1980). Five main types of supporter were identified from the data: family and other relatives; other people with disabilities; professionals; non-disabled friends; and non-disabled acquaintances.

In the paragraphs above social networks were typified as service-based or home-based and as either self-contained or embracing. Classifying networks in this way suggested that those living in residential

settings typically had social networks composed of very few supporters, and few if any, intimate friends, while a variety of both self-contained and embracing networks characterised the lives of people living at home with family, containing a range of supporters including non-disabled friends and acquaintances and some intimate friends. There is a need to compare at different points in time and therefore, it is tempting to quantify the findings. However, what was focused on was not so much how many people were available to offer social support, but a discussion of the nature of the support and the range of people (non-disabled and disabled friends, family members, neighbours etc.) available to provide that support.

Interview transcripts were examined and a list made of those identified by the interviewee as providing support under the six main categories. What follows is an outline of the responses to these questions.

Private & Personal Feelings

Almost without exception, it was staff to which residents of hostels and group homes turned when they wanted to discuss personal issues. Sometimes there was no one with whom they would consider sharing intimate thoughts. On rare occasions, family could still be whom they turned to, especially mothers. Those living in residential care settings did not generally consider co-residents as friends with whom they could share personal thoughts. It was always to staff that they turned. It almost seemed as if dependency on staff was something that was encouraged in residential settings:

"I well if you're upset about something right, tell people in the office about it."

"Tell staff about my girlfriend."

People who were living with family or were independent relied on a more diverse range of supporters for help with private and personal feelings. Family were very important, particularly mothers, but siblings were also a significant source of support even when they no longer lived at home. The one married individual in the sample stated that he turned to his wife. Some living at home stated that they would turn to friends, both disabled and non-disabled friends:

"I usually just talk to my friends. They've probably been through the same thing"

Another young woman said:

"I've got this boy I fancied in college. I told all my friends about him."

Financial & Material Help

"I wouldn't feel good about borrowing money from people, I never have felt good about that"

On the whole, the sample individuals stated they preferred not to ask other people for money - *"I'd rather do without, I don't like asking anybody these kind of things."* Again those living in residential settings relied most on staff to lend money, although it seemed that what was being referred to was the practice of staff allowing access to the individual's own money on request. That it was not common practice to borrow money from other people might suggest a number of things including: individuals' need for money was not great as they did not go out much other than to organised activities involving little or no cost; that money was tightly controlled by staff; that individuals had a strong moral sense of the 'wrongness' of borrowing money. There was greater reliance on parents providing extra financial support if it were needed when the individual was living at home, and this could be either parent, but more commonly it was fathers who were approached about money. Again people living at home were not keen to ask other people for money, preferring to manage within the limits of their existing budget, no matter how modest. Not many were able to identify neighbours on whom they could rely for other kinds of material help, such as borrowing milk or bread but a few of those living in the community with their families, and the married individual identified supportive neighbours.

Advice/Help

For advice on a range of matters such as general help or advice, thinking about moving, help with money and advice regarding clothes and hairstyles, it was predominantly to professionals that individuals living in residential settings turned, rarely family members. This included social workers and supported employment staff, but mainly it was residential staff. Again, a more diverse pattern emerged for those living at home. Most turned to family members for help and advice on a range of matters, particularly to mothers and siblings, while a few indicated that they were inclined to seek their own solutions with help from professionals with whom they were in contact such as social workers, or through agencies like the Citizens Advice Bureau:

"I sort out most of my own problems with bills and things like that. I've only ever needed once to go to the CAB to sort out a financial matter. It was a dispute with a catalogue company"

Some stated that they would turn to supported employment staff for advice, commonly where the project had given welfare benefits advice to the individual. A couple of people relied on their friends to provide general advice.

Praise

Clearly, although family, friends and staff sometimes praised individuals on a tidy or clean appearance- *"Staff say when I'm coming out of the shower, they always say that about me, 'He's looking very nice'"* - they commented less in respect of the individual's achievements or contribution. Positive affirmation was distinctly lacking in their lives, as were intimate friends. It is probable that

this would have some effect on individuals' self-esteem. Some people stated that no one at all gave praise or made positive comments about either their appearance, or a contribution they had made:

Interviewee: "It just depends, sometimes they do, and sometimes they don't."

JR: Can you think of anybody in particular who does this?

Interviewee: No I can't think of anybody"

It was mainly staff in residential settings who gave praise, while the family were the main source for those living at home, although the few with more embracing social support networks, could rely on a broader range of people to volunteer praise:

"Yeah, there's quite a few people who do that to me. I mean you've got sort of family, neighbours, and friends. I mean if you've done something right most of them will say it you know. "

Practical Help

Given the profile of the sample in chapter 6, it is not surprising that no-one felt they needed any practical help with physical tasks, such as getting dressed, bathing/showering, eating, going to the toilet etc. One person had had severe epileptic fits in the past and the neighbours had provided physical help and support for the family. The majority, regardless of where they were living, were able to travel by bus even if in reality that meant selected routes only. Family members, a few friends and professionals (such as community psychiatric nurse), occasionally provided transport. Some people's informal networks of support were stronger than others:

"If somebody sees me in the street and says 'where are you going?' and gives me a lift down the road. It's like it varies. They're quite good the neighbours downstairs. They've got a car and they've helped us in the supermarket and things like that. "

When asked whether they needed help with shopping, few people seemed to do any shopping, apart from occasional personal and clothes shopping. Food shopping was a domestic task performed by others, that is, staff or families (commonly mothers) of those living at home. In contrast, individuals living more independently, including the married individual in the sample, did undertake shopping with support from neighbours in the form of a lift in the car or being able to borrow a car.

Surprisingly, the common response I received when asking about what help they received from others was *"I help staff"* or *"I help mum with the shopping"*. It was clearly not perceived as something for which they had much, if any, responsibility. This reflected the social division of labour within families as well as institutionalised regimes operating within hostels and other group living situations.

Relatives or staff would help with house decorating should the need arise. This was a hypothetical question in the majority of cases, and the responses suggested male relatives (fathers and brothers in particular), and professional supporters such as social workers were perceived as the most probable to provide this kind of help. Again, as some people had earlier identified the CAB and other agencies as appropriate to offer certain kinds of advice, paying a tradesman, in this case a painter and decorator, was considered the most appropriate source of support. This seems to indicate that certain individuals

feel much less connected to others and can rely less on other people for informal support of various kinds, including providing practical help. It is also reflective of the restricted social support networks of some people and the nature of current support being identified with disability services.

In a previous section it was shown that the most common activities people engaged in were isolated activities at home or in the hostel, and many had very self-contained or limited social networks. It is probably not surprising then that few could identify someone who would offer overnight or longer-term accommodation if that need should arise and that an external source such as "*a homeless unit*" seemed the most obvious choice to some. This was particularly true of those living in residential care settings: few hostel or group home residents could identify anyone with whom they could stay temporarily. Similarly, those living with family did not generally feel staying away from home was an option open to them, although there were interviewees who could identify a friend with whom they could stay or family member, in particular a sibling who no longer lived at home, or a grandparent were the most common.

Socialising

The social lives of those living in residential settings were largely prescribed by the needs of the other people with whom they lived, and the people paid to be with them. Family and friends featured mainly at celebrations such as Christmas and birthdays. Most hostel and group home residents went on holiday with other residents and staff, or sometimes with other day centre or club attenders if a day centre or special club arranged the holiday. There were often no particular named friends with whom to socialise on a more informal basis, apart from acquaintances met in the local pub or on the street outside the hostel, which is why most residents' social networks could be described as service-based and self-contained.

The social networks of those living with family or independently in the community have been found to be more varied and embracing. It was also family with whom Christmas and other celebrations were spent, but there were also extended family members and friends frequently mentioned. Unlike those in residential care settings, they could identify specific friends with whom they socialised on a more informal basis, although again males did not so much as arrange to meet friends as meet 'pals' or 'folk' at the local pub or nightclub. They went on holiday with close family and sometimes friends. Generally speaking social interaction with neighbours was limited, although the married individual relied for practical and emotional support from close neighbours who it was said "*will have to move with us when we move house!*"

SELF PERCEPTION AND LIFE SATISFACTION

As one way to test the quality of the support provided, people were asked the extent to which they felt satisfied with the social support available to them. Exploring the subjective judgment of life satisfaction before employment showed a high degree of satisfaction. The majority answered positively, being mostly satisfied with the emotional and material support they received and least satisfied with social opportunities. However, self-assessment was sometimes expressed as an absence of problems - *"no problems at the moment anyway"* - or provoked an answer such as - *"it could be better"*.

Asking people about life satisfaction at this point in time elicited comparison from some with life in the hospital from which they had recently moved. Life in the community was definitely preferable to them:

"Feel far better. You go on holidays, you go in the car, and we went to the pictures on Monday with Jim. "

"The only quality of life is, it's hard to understand and er, nobody to answer to, nobody to be responsible to, you don't have to give anybody answers and say to them why and everything like that you know. I think it's a better quality of life and it's not so noisy as well."

Four individuals were specifically dissatisfied with the lack of friends in their lives. This was not necessarily because existing social lives were limited: some led active social lives, being involved in several socially-integrative activities, but still relying on close family and family friends to accompany them. Others did lead socially isolated lives, having few people in their social networks other than close family, staff or other people with learning disabilities, and spending most of their time in either isolated or special activities. They all expected having a job to dramatically alter their lives socially.

SUMMARY

In this research, as in other studies (Stalker & Harris, 1998; Guess et al, 1985) it was found those formal and informal supporters who can thus exert a powerful influence on the potential for self-determination set the parameters of choice. A published analysis of the body of research examining changes in peoples' lives moving from hospital settings to community-based settings, concluded that whilst improvements were evident in choice over daily activities they are often less so over important life decisions (Emerson & Hatton, 1995). Individuals in the sample had varying degrees of autonomy over their lives, with parents and staff exercising control and protection, most significantly in respect of finances.

Lack of autonomy regarding finances, as well as not having the means to afford to do things were cited as the main factors limiting social lives. Whether supported employment and the opportunity to earn a wage would significantly affect this will be discussed in chapters 8 and 9. That so many of the sample perceived themselves to have made a choice in relation to supported employment shows that people with learning disabilities can, and do, participate in major decisions about their lives, including making a decision to take a job, when they are given the opportunity. However, what that choice had meant in practice often amounted to little more than 'take it or leave it'.

In chapter 6 it was shown that people with learning disabilities and their families commonly expected supported employment to improve their social lives and opportunities for inclusion. In fact, the most common expectations were about developing workplace relationships and having better social lives. Analysis of the pre-employment data revealed among other things, important features of the composition of social networks before supported employment: the social networks of those in residential settings tended to be self-contained and involved few non-disabled friends, and relatives were seen infrequently. Some of those at home had self-contained networks while others were more embracing including a wide range of relatives, non-disabled friends and non-disabled acquaintances, as well as paid supporters. Social opportunities were affected by the availability of company and it is probably not a coincidence that those in residential settings were more involved in special group activities. The most limiting factors in the development of their social lives were a lack of both integrative opportunities and money. This is consistent with research undertaken by Jahoda and others (1990) on the social networks of individuals moving into community-based residential options.

Most were engaged in some form of socially integrative activity with opportunities for meeting non-disabled people, but they were more commonly involved with 'isolated activities'. These were principally 'normal' home-based activities like watching TV or videos, not very different in fact from most other people in society. The data showed that some people were already involved in several socially integrative activities, although they were in the minority. Many were using public facilities and were therefore visible in their communities, particularly those who were at home. However, the most significant conclusion to be drawn was that although their lives were not dominated by special activities arranged only for people with disabilities, the types of activities they were generally engaged in offered only limited potential for social inclusion.

It is not surprising that it was to family that individuals living at home turned and upon whom they relied most for many facets of social support. Confiding in parents, especially mothers, was widespread. The more restricted social networks of those living in residential settings meant that it was to staff that they turned for significant social support. Perry & Felce (1994) also found that the extent of staff support was critical to how much individuals were able to participate in everyday activities. As a consequence, the most frequent form of leisure activity was often home-based. In

chapter 9, whether and how engaging in supported employment impacts on individuals' social support networks beyond simply having a presence in integrative workplaces will be examined.

CHAPTER 8:

PROFILE OF JOBS & INDIVIDUALS' JOB SATISFACTION

INTRODUCTION

Presenting voices and lives in meaningful and accurate ways is a persistent challenge for qualitative researchers (Richardson, 1990). As with all knowledge, the picture presented here will be historically and temporally situated, partial and subjective. However, as few supported employment researchers have looked directly at the perspectives of people with learning disabilities, it provides a unique snapshot of their perception of the process and outcomes of supported employment, and offers some insights into the meaning of this service in people's lives. Throughout the next two chapters the voices of the interviewees bring the reader back to the lives of individual people with learning disabilities experiencing supported employment, and the reflections of their carers and supported employment project staff. None of the names used in the text are the individuals' actual names to preserve their anonymity.

This and the next chapter, presents an analysis of the outcomes of supported employment for the sample individuals several months after jobs had started. In the present chapter, I discuss three main areas: (1) the supported employment jobs; (2) job support; and (3) individuals' job satisfaction. These themes reflect the research questions asked, and the substantive issues that had emerged from the literature review and through analysis of data from first stage interviews, observations and questionnaire responses.

THE POST EMPLOYMENT SAMPLE

At the second stage, 14 of the original 18 individuals agreed to be interviewed. This was approximately 9-10 months after the first interview. The 14 consisted of six individuals from Project 1, four from Project 2, and four from Project 3. As individuals had been recruited into the sample at different points in time, these second stage interviews therefore occurred over a period of several months. The four who were not interviewed a second time included three people (all from Project 2) who had declined to participate any further, and one individual (from Project 3) who could not be contacted despite several attempts to do so.

Consent to participate at this second stage was largely determined by parental attitudes to both the research enterprise and the supported employment agency. It was the mothers of two individuals who refused access on the individuals' behalf. As both lived with their parents, it proved impossible to contact them without first approaching their parents. One of these individuals had not in fact taken up the supported employment job she had been offered, but instead had found employment in the open market that fitted closer to her ideal job. Consequently, as she was no longer a client of the project her mother decided that she did not need to take part in the research study. A second mother disallowed any further involvement in the research on the grounds that the interviews were intrusive and lengthy.

A further individual from Project 2 decided independently that she did not want to participate in the second stage interviews. This person's job had ended after just a few weeks, which had been a traumatic experience that had coloured her view of supported employment and consequently, her attitude towards the research. It was with regret therefore, that the outcomes of supported employment for four individuals could not be included at this stage. Such situations illustrate the complexities of ethical issues surrounding qualitative research interviews with people with learning disabilities and their families living in the community.

Where parents were unwilling to allow access to their son or daughter the families' right to privacy had to be respected. However as a result, the individual's right may have been diluted, as it was impossible to determine whether it was part of a wider issue of disempowerment or there was a clash between the opinions of parents and the opinions of individuals with learning disabilities. I had a sense that the depth of personal information sought through this research was indeed difficult for some families and may have unintentionally created friction. For example, some parents were sensitive about the gap in their son's or daughter's social life which was accentuated by my line of questioning.

(1) THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT JOBS

This section looks specifically at the types and characteristics of the jobs that were found through supported employment and individuals' perspectives. The hourly pattern of work and rates of pay for jobs are compared, the length of time in the job started at the beginning of the research is looked at, and the reasons why some jobs terminated. Where thought relevant, the variables of project and living situation are explored in relation to these outcomes.

Job & Employer Types

The jobs found were categorised into a number of different types, and also using standard industrial categories as found in “Social Trends” (Great Britain Office for National Statistics, 1997). These are summarised in the following two tables. The numbers do not sum 18 because the individual who had found a job on the open market is excluded. Details of the jobs found for four individuals for whom there is no interview data at the second stage however, have been included in these two tables:

Table 7: Type of Job Found Through Supported Employment

<i>JOB TYPES</i>	<i>PROJECT 1</i>	<i>PROJECT 2</i>	<i>PROJECT 3</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Domestic/Cleaning	1	2	-	3
Chemical Cleaning/Sterilisation	1	-	1	2
Kitchen Helper	1	1	-	2
Grounds Keeping/ Labouring	-	1	1	2
Supermarket Attendant	1	1	-	2
Warehouse Worker	1	-	-	1
Reception/Telephone	-	-	1	1
Clerical	-	-	1	1
Stablehand	-	-	1	1
Hospital Porter	1	-	-	1
Shop Assistant	-	1	-	1

Table 8: Jobs by Industry Type

<i>INDUSTRY TYPE</i>	<i>PROJECT 1</i>	<i>PROJECT 2</i>	<i>PROJECT 3</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
1) Transport & Communications	-	-	1	1
2) Distribution	3	3	-	6
3) Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	-	-	1	1
4) Other Services	3	3	3	9

Table 7 on the previous page shows that a range of jobs was found through each of the projects. In terms of the range of tasks (rather than job titles), the most common task performed was a cleaning task. Jobs categorised as grounds-keeping or general labouring mainly consisted of collecting or sweeping up litter, while kitchen-helpers collected and cleaned crockery and cutlery, and chemical sterilisation involved cleaning technical implements or containers as a major part of the task. The one person employed as stablehand primarily had the job of cleaning the stables. Very few of the jobs were in administration or customer service. All the jobs were individual placements, rather than in enclaves or workgroups. However, four out of five placements found by Project 3 were in employment settings where there were other placements, including one site where five people from the project were working.

Applying standard industrial categorisation to the jobs revealed that the types of industry represented by these jobs were limited to four principal categories as shown in Table 8. This concurred with Beyer et al's (1996b) survey, and the earlier national survey of supported employment by Lister et al (1992). Beyer et al (1996b) found an overrepresentation of jobs in the categories of 'distribution' and 'other services' compared with the general pattern of jobs across the country. Similarly in this study, jobs were predominantly in the 'other services' sectors (9 jobs were in the public sector including caring services, health administration, sanitary services and leisure services), and 'distribution' (6 jobs were in catering or retailing) and significantly, none were in banking, construction, manufacturing, engineering, or energy and water supply industries.

Supported employment jobs were in what American writers refer to as 'entry-level' jobs, that is, jobs that for many people provide money as well as exposure to the world of work in the short term, the start of the career journey, which may take many different directions. This explains in part the concentration of jobs in certain industries. Other research, both in America and the UK has suggested that people with learning disabilities are gaining access predominantly to low status jobs with minimum wages as demographic changes make these positions difficult to fill (Bass & Drewett, 1996; Mank, 1994).

Job Creation

Modifying a job already being performed or developing a job that combines required skills, is a common and important strategy in supported employment without which people with learning disabilities may be perceived as being incapable of performing designated jobs. Two of the jobs found by Project 1, that is, the hospital porter and the domestic assistant in a local authority home for older people, were advertised posts. All other jobs had been negotiated in one way or another by supported employment staff with employers. Nevertheless, all the jobs found required performance of tasks that

had to be done by someone, whether that person had a disability or not. In this sense therefore, all jobs were 'real jobs'.

Whilst job modification was clearly an effective strategy, some of the jobs created lacked a clarity of remit which had an impact on expectations of workers, and secondly, on how performance was evaluated. As one project worker commented:

"There was no job description and they weren't very sure what the job was. I've learnt that if the job is not structured and it fails, it looks like they (supported employees) were incompetent when they were asked to do things."

Notably, lack of task-definition, often combined with additional 'ad-hoc tasks', characterised the job experiences of some of those who had lost their jobs (3 out of 7 people). For instance, one job coach (Project 3) observed:

"I don't think they knew themselves what they wanted until someone was actually doing the job. If there wasn't anything to do, they would try and find things to do."

Another person with Project 1 who had lost his job mentioned that there had been conflicting demands put on him by different supervisors, and that some of his supervisors' expectations were unreasonable:

"You have your routine and then you work away, the job's getting done, then they'll come in and say 'Do it this way'. They would come in and say 'Would you do this' and another said, 'Would you do that', when I already had about 200 boxes to unpack and put on hangers or put tags on."

This particular worksite suffered from high job turnover - *"They go through a lot of staff"* (job coach). The job coach referred to the lack of structure in explaining why the job had not worked out:

"The difficulty was that it wasn't very structured and they were putting a lot of ad hoc demands on him. There were too many chiefs and not enough indians. It was generally run like that and David was getting conflicting orders."

A third individual had been found a job by Project 2 working full-time as general labourer with a local firm, where his job was to keep the outside area tidy. Bill's job description was unclear:

"You're wandering around, sweeping up a bit and then the next minute, you can't help it, it's all a mess again...I was finished my job then I'd go back to him. I was asking my boss what he would like me to do and he's like saying 'Well go back and finish what you were doing'. But it was finished, you know. "

Number of Hours Worked

Table 9: Number of Hours Per Week of Supported Employment Jobs

<i>HOURS PER WEEK</i>	<i>PROJECT 1</i>	<i>PROJECT 2</i>	<i>PROJECT 3</i>	<i>NUMBER</i>
Under 16	2	4	2	8
16-20	3	1	1	5
21-29	-	-	1	1
30+	1	1	1	3

Around half were jobs for 16 hours or under: 16 hours being identified as the benchmark by the Department of Employment as the lowest acceptable threshold for full time work in supported employment. Findings from other supported employment studies reveal a remarkably similar pattern: in 1991 43% of supported employees in a Welsh survey were reported to be working less than 16 hours per week (Kilsby et al, 1995); Lister et al (1992) found 45% of jobs to be less than 15 hours per week; and Beyer et al's (1996) survey of the costs and benefits of supported employment found 49.9% of workers being supported in jobs for under 16 hours per week. Research has found that part-time jobs have implications for the 'quality' of outcomes, in particular, social integration (Beyer et al, 1996b; Kilsby et al, 1995).

Part-time jobs were commonest in Project 2, though not exclusively. Closer examination of jobs for under 16 hours per week however, found three people working less than five hours, and all were from Project 2: one was working for three hours for one day, and two were working just four hours per week. Such hesitancy to create full-time jobs could relate to individual preferences (there certainly were those who sought part-time work) or to any one of the barriers described in chapter 2: the welfare benefits system; low expectations; and structural issues such as the local economy or changes in employment patterns and working life cycles (Hewitt, 1996; Handy 1984). Bass & Drewett (1996) found that welfare benefits and arrangements for paying for accommodation were powerful determinants of both the number of hours worked and wage levels. Six in the sample (one from Project 1; three from Project 2; and two from Project 3) were working for benefits disregard and one for therapeutic earnings (Project 2), both of which place limits on the number of hours anyone in receipt of benefits can work.

A staff member from Project 2 alluded to professionals' attitudes and programmatic features as having an impact on the number of job hours worked:

"It's a good job match in many ways though I'm not entirely pleased with it. It's very part-time which I think stems from them (job-finders) not having the confidence in the clients".

Project 2 made a distinction between the way it operated the government sponsored scheme and what was referred to locally as 'wee supported employment', an urban-aid funded programme primarily serving individuals from day centres and college. All those working few hours were being catered for through the 'wee supported employment' programme. That the individuals served by Project 2 were not significantly different in profile from those say in Project 1, would indicate that programmatic differences do have some impact on outcomes such as the number of hours supported employees work.

Only three people, one from each of the projects, had jobs nearer the conventional view of full-time work, that is, 30 hours or more: they were working 35, 32 and 30 hours each. All were paid jobs. Two jobs found by Project 2 utilising SPS were over 20 hours. Beyer, et al (1996b) highlighted that the main weakness of supported employment agencies was in delivering jobs with a lower average number of hours compared with government sponsored programmes, and this was certainly supported by these findings. Two of the three in full-time jobs were still in these jobs at the second stage interviews. Both were described by project staff as individuals with 'borderline learning disabilities', which might suggest that people with perceived lower support needs are the most likely to be offered full-time jobs.

Rates of Pay

Receiving pay is one of the defining features of supported employment, although a narrow focus on wages is argued to obscure the positive benefits that can be gained especially for people with severe disabilities in unpaid positions (Bass & Drewett, 1997). Further, chapter 5 showed that supported employment projects do not always equate paid jobs with 'real jobs', preferring to describe jobs as 'meaningful' or 'worthwhile'. In chapter 6, getting paid was identified as the most important expected outcome for users.

Comparison between individuals' financial situation pre and post supported employment was not possible because the information collected was incomplete. This would seem typical of supported employment projects generally. In 1996, Beyer et al reported that some services did not routinely collect financial information on workers, such as benefits income, wages and taxes paid, expressing concerns over the ethics of such a practice. Project 1 was unique in recording financial information formally and that was because it related to a key performance indicator in respect of alleviating poverty and deprivation.

In chapter 5 it was noted that Project 3 mainly secured unpaid placements with 'sympathetic employers', primarily aiming to offer work experience and a chance to enhance independent living

skills. In contrast, both Projects 1 and 2 emphasised pay as an important dimension of supported employment. The outcome was that all jobs found by Projects 1 and 2 were paid jobs at a rate of at least £3 per hour (pre-minimum wage), while the majority of jobs found by Project 3 were unpaid work placements. This was in contrast to its service users who identified pay as an expectation of supported employment (chapter 6). Bass & Drewett’s (1996, p 64) research found “ *little evidence for the belief that unpaid placements develop into paid jobs*”. Many employment projects make extensive use of unpaid work placements or ‘work trials’ for limited periods, but supported employment in Project 3 generally equated with unpaid placements. Table 10 below gives further details of the hourly rates paid for supported employment jobs.

Table 10: Hourly Rates of Pay for Supported Employees

HOURLY RATE OF PAY	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3	TOTAL
Unpaid	-	-	3	3
Under £1	-	-	1	1
Between £3- £3.95	6	5	1	12
£4	-	1	-	1

Rates of pay for supported employment tended to be in line with the new national minimum wage (i.e. £3.65 per hour), which is commensurate with the ‘entry-level’ jobs found. This is a positive result given that over 80% of people in a national survey of supported employment in 1991 (Lister et al, 1992) were earning under £3 per hour. Nevertheless, it compares unfavourably with mean wages for employees in full-time work generally (Employment Department, 1994). As commented above, the number of part-time jobs found also meant that many individuals were not much better off in work. Millar et al (1997) found that there is a much greater risk of experiencing insecurity of employment and low pay in part-time employment. Further, part-time entry-level jobs receive much lower levels of pay than wages in general (Gregg & Wadsworth, 1996). The previous section identified that a high proportion of jobs were in part-time positions, and it is therefore not surprising that financial benefits were generally modest. For some there was no financial gain, for example, one individual with Project 1 was working 20 hours for just under £4 per hour and was, in his words, “*breaking even*”, with a top-up from Disability Working Allowance. Due to changes in his benefit situation, charges for council rent and Council Tax had increased and the family no longer enjoyed fringe benefits such as free school meals.

At the extremes of the pay range, one individual was earning less than £1 per hour due to the employer applying a notional amount of £10 per week as payment for 14 hours work, while at the other end of the spectrum, another received £4 an hour, thus allowing him to earn the full benefits disregard each

week for four hours work. The individual earning less than £1 per hour was happy with his job, was nonetheless dissatisfied with the level of wages, although his job coach assumed that money was “*not an issue*” for him as a hostel resident: as acknowledged earlier, living in residential settings affects perceived capacity for paid work. Of the employer in question, a charitable company, the job coach commented: “*He pays minimum wages, if there’s a way to get people for nothing he’ll find it*”. At this particular workplace, the pool of employees was drawn entirely from the ranks of government schemes and other specialist employment projects.

Length of Time in Jobs

Table 11 Length of Time in Jobs

NO. OF MONTHS	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3	TOTAL
1 month or less	-	-	2	2
2 -3 months	-	2	-	2
4 months	1	-	-	1
5-7 months	-	-	-	-
8 months	1	1	-	2
9 months +	4	3	3	10

At the second interviews, more people than not (10 people) were in the job started at the beginning of the research. One could infer from this that job retention rates in the supported employment projects were generally good. It was also marginally better for jobs with Project 1. Nevertheless, seven jobs had been lost by the second stage interviews. This equated with two from Project 1, three from Project 2 and two from Project 3.

A higher proportion of females lost their jobs compared to males: 4 out of 6 females compared to 3 out of 12 males. One might speculate that it reflects that the kinds of jobs found for females were in more precarious occupations, or that it reflects less priority allocated to maintaining females in jobs. These are only speculative comments given the size of the study sample. Gender was not a focal issue in itself, although findings such as this may highlight a need for future research to examine women’s experiences of supported employment more closely.

Rationale for the Loss of Job

A performance-related issue was reported in four out of seven instances where an individual had lost a job. Frequently it was not that he/she had been unable to perform the job, more that motivation had

been poor. The commonest reasons for job loss identified by employment specialists are 'poor work ethic', and secondly, 'inappropriate social behaviour' (Beyer et al, 1996; Salzberg et al, 1988; Hanley-Maxwell et al, 1986; Martin et al, 1986). Only in respect of two individuals from Project 3 had there been any issue relating to reported 'inappropriate social behaviour'.

Individuals' accounts of why they had lost jobs sometimes differed from projects' accounts, and illustrate that job loss results from a multitude of factors. For example, Marie (Project 3), who had been working 16 hours in an office, explained the reason she had lost the job as - *"It was my time up or something like that and it was temporary anyway, so someone else had to go into it"*. As was customary in this project, Marie had not been told that it was a paid job and that following a successful probationary period she could be offered a permanent job. Project workers identified issues around social skills as the main problem:

"One girl had said that she was not feeling well because of her period and M had asked about this girl's period at other times and it hadn't been appreciated. Her social skills were poor, her conversation was inappropriate at times as was her behaviour."

Further, it had been assumed by project staff that money was not an important factor in the success of this placement, but other evidence refuted this. In commenting on another temporary job, Marie indicated that pay in exchange for work was important to her - *"I liked the job because we got some money for that, we got about £8 for that afternoon"*. Further, her residential keyworker commented that *"money is important to Marie, she is thrilled when she gets money"* and was sceptical of the project's suggestion that voluntary work was ideal for Marie. Another facet of Marie's job dissatisfaction was occasional boredom and even more significant, that she had to travel quite a distance to and from work (over 20 miles).

Another individual from Project 3 whose job had ended after four days realised that she had lost the job because her conduct was inappropriate for the setting. The reason identified by the project and her residential keyworker was that she had adopted an informal, and therefore overly familiar style, with senior employees when the situation called for formality. However, that the job lasted such a short time made the residential keyworker critical of both the job match and the quality of the job support received:

"If she let them down in the first week or so couldn't she have had more support? It was the easy option to pull her out. If someone was there with her most of the time, why was there a major problem? I don't think she was given a chance"

Project staff had told one individual from Project 2 that he was *"slacking in the job"*. His poor performance, coupled with high absenteeism had been unacceptable to his employer who had subsequently sacked him. As far as Bill was concerned a major problem had been the isolation of the job: his job as general labourer was performed mostly in isolation from any other co-worker at the site and it had been his aspiration to work alongside other people. Another supported employee with

Project 2 had lost her job after eight months as a result of performance problems. Relations with the employer, a private nursing home owner, had been problematic from the outset: he had wanted to renegotiate a higher wage subsidy than the maximum of 70% for SPS. Sam had been unaware that her employer was critical of her performance as there had been no direct communication from the employer while the job coach reported knowing that work performance had been variable.

"He said my work wasn't up to standard...They spoke to me in the office. They got me in the office and told me...I got told on the Monday and my last day was on the Friday, Friday the 1st of March. I felt very upset."

Losing the job was sometimes due to factors completely outside the control of the individual. Chrys's job (Project 2) in a staff canteen ended when it had closed down less than three months into the job. Individuals sometimes chose to leave jobs because they were dissatisfied with some aspect. David (Project 1), for example, had decided to leave his job after four months, for a number of reasons including its lack of structure, a preference for a different task, and most significantly, because David was experiencing another major life change:

"The only reason I left the job was it was getting on top of me, getting a new job, settling into a new job, settling into a new house. It's fairly hard for anybody. You just try to settle into some kind of routine with the job and then ...a new house."

Moving house occurred at the same time as starting his supported employment job:

"I have since questioned whether it's a good idea to put people into jobs when they're moving house. That was a big thing for him. It was difficult to make all the adjustments for the job and living independently."
(Job coach)

One individual left his job of eight months, in search of one with better career prospects. Mike (Project 1) had "wanted a bit of a career, something to work for, something different". Three were looking for other jobs by the second stage interviews. Two others (Project 3) returned to the in-centre programme to participate in job finding activities, social skills training, and vocational qualifications training; one individual (Project 2) took a job offer at the sheltered employment factory run by the social work department and thus remained in the SEP. For such individuals job loss had been a signal of the failure of supported employment in integrated settings, and had triggered a return to facility-based provision designed to enhance their 'employability' through training and sheltered work experience. Consequently, for some it would prove harder to return to ordinary employment. Bill for example, was very satisfied with his new job in the sheltered setting where he was earning more money under SEP than he had working 20 hours as a general labourer, casting doubts about his future prospects in integrated employment:

"The local authority rate is higher than factories around here for manual rates. Wages are paid regardless of productivity. Bill wouldn't last five minutes in an ordinary factory. He is capable of doing the work but his concentration is poor. He gets bored easily."
(SEP Co-ordinator)

Impact of Losing a Job

There was evidence that losing a job was damaging, especially when individuals' self-confidence was fragile to begin with - *"it knocked her hard when she lost the job"* was a not uncommon statement. It mattered little if the job was a few hours a week or full-time, paid or unpaid or whether losing the job had been as a result of poor work performance or not, what losing it symbolised for the individual was very powerful. Chrys, who had initially been highly motivated to work, had become disillusioned by the experience:

"The job did not really make a great impact on Chrys's life, when I asked her if she would like more supported employment her answer was that she was not fussy"
(Residential Keyworker)

For some however, the experience was viewed more positively as an opportunity for learning which had sharpened their focus on pursuing an ideal job. In chapter 7, it was suggested that in reality job choice was often limited: a choice between taking a job or not, rather than a choice between different options. In many cases, individuals had had little or no, direct involvement in job search activities. Chrys above when asked how she had come to be offered the job replied, *"Somebody looked into it for me. I think it was somebody who saw the job coach"*.

(2) JOB SUPPORT

The model of supported employment accentuates support that is individually tailored, based on individual preferences, encourages social integration and importantly, that is not time-limited (see chapter 3). Although historically the process of designing and organising supports has consisted of job coaches providing the needed support, albeit in flexible ways, this trend is changing to one of developing skills and strategies that will promote the use of internal or natural supports within the workplace (Callahan & Garner, 1997). In this section, it is the aim to give a flavour of the job support received from each of the three projects.

Type & Duration of Job Support

As discussed earlier, supported employment incorporates a 'place and train' approach that implies intensive on-the-job support. The nature and intensity of job support however, varied across the sample as might be expected. It included help at interviews; to perform job tasks; with travelling to and from work; reassurance to the employer; troubleshooting; help with finding better jobs; advice and support with welfare benefits problems; with fitting in at work; to retrain when the job changed; and finally, ongoing support in the form of regular telephone calls or workplace visits. All types of support identified were common in all of the projects, and were predominantly provided by external job coaching rather than internal or natural supports. There were differences between projects and

between individuals, in terms of both the duration and comprehensiveness of the support offered. This is examined in relation to each project.

Project 1

Project 1 provided the most intensive on-the-job training support by job coaches of the three projects and it did make use of internal supports. Only one person out of six did not receive job coaching support. This individual described by project staff as 'borderline learning disabilities', had been helped to find and secure his ideal job, for which there existed an employer-provided induction-training programme. The support he had received from the project had been in terms of job search and preparation as described in chapter 5. The remaining five individuals served by this project, received between two weeks and seven months job support: the average was just over two months. Duration of professional support was in no way related to the number of weekly hours worked, as the person receiving over seven months support was working slightly fewer weekly hours than the person who received just two weeks. Instead it was linked to individual needs, perceived motivation in the job, the complexity of the job task, and importantly, to the availability of natural support in the workplace.

The one individual receiving two weeks job support was working 20 hours: support in total therefore amounting to 40 hours. The main focus of job support had been training in the work routine. It had also been necessary to provide welfare benefits help, as there had been several problems with housing benefits. Project staff described him as a "*text book supported employment case*". For another, job coaching had been ongoing for eight weeks (or the equivalent of over 90 hours), not because the job task itself had been complex, but on account of its social isolation. Working alongside someone else had a positive effect on his pace of work. However, his mother hinted that he could have managed with less job support:

"At the beginning yes he thought it was very good for him because she was there for him to help him along, to encourage him and things like that. But I think he was glad when she finished because as he put it, 'she just gets in the road'...It's like someone breathing down your neck all the time. So it did help him, but he wants to know that he can work on his own and he's proved that he can do that."

Another individual, Tom, had been trained in the job for ten weeks (or an equivalent of 80 hours) with three different job coaches. Once Tom learned the job task and had mastered travelling to work by himself, the job coach concentrated on promoting mixing with co-workers and expected behaviour, for example, good timekeeping:

"Once he got the hang of it, the main thing had been clocking in and out at the right times. We were trying to make use of natural supports at that time. In practice his supervisor directs Tom to work areas and he tells him when it is time to go. Quite often he arrives early. He had clocked out a couple of times too early. We tried a few things at first like watches and alarm clocks but Tom fiddled with them too much and that didn't work. We

accompanied him on his breaks because Tom was quite anxious on entering the staff canteen at first".

David had also received ten weeks full support, (equating to 160 hours in total), due in part to the ad hoc nature of the job task and changing demands on account of changes of supervisor. Intensive job coaching had maintained him in the job for a time:

"I found it difficult to motivate him. He would quite happily watch the world go by. He didn't need help with social interaction. He was quite independent in terms of breaks and mixing, it was more about learning the job. The warehouse was such a state...The work was like fighting a losing battle, you just seemed to never get anywhere. It was a problem that affected other peoples' motivation. It was also a confined working space."

One individual initially received full or daily job support for seven months, (equivalent to 546 hours support), which had been faded to just under four hours each week. This intensity of support was on account of the complexity of the task and changes in job task. It was also recognised that Mike had become somewhat dependent on the job coach's presence and resisted any attempt to fade support altogether:

"There's a lot to learn and there are changes all the time. When other staff are shown things Mike is shown as well. He panics though when I start to leave. He didn't want us to withdraw. He sees me as his crutch, that's why we're withdrawing slowly a half hour at a time. Mike is very able and you sometimes think 'why am I here?' It's his mental health problems really. The reason we've been so long in supporting him has been his workload has expanded, things have changed. It's good for Mike because he's building relationships with new people all the time...More than any other client he's made us look at the support we give in the workplace. He doesn't fit with text book theory of training in the job and pulling out."

Project 2

Out of four individuals from Project 2 for which data from second stage interviews existed, two had received no job support, either because the employer provided support, or it was perceived that *"the job was not sufficiently varied to require a job coach"*. Another, for whom there is no interview data, received no job coach support and was trained by her employer. Two others received job support for three and four weeks respectively. Of the two who did not receive on-the-job support, and for whom interview data exists, one continued successfully in his job, while the second lost the job. The only time project staff visited the workplace was when the employer highlighted a problem with work performance. With reference to the earlier discussion of this particular situation, the assumption that adequate support would be 'naturally' available might be challenged. That no direct job coach support was needed had been an assessment made of the job, and not of the individual's needs. Indeed, Bill's need for supervision was identified from this experience. The other employer providing internal supports had experience of supported employment as a social care provider that might have contributed to its success.

Jenny received intensive on-the-job support for three weeks from a job coach, although in reality this equated to just 18 hours in total (or 6 hours each week), after which the job coach was present for part of a working day for the next two weeks just to observe how well she performed the task and workplace interactions. Once the practical tasks of the job had been mastered, social expectations were tackled both with Jenny and her co-workers:

"In week 3 I managed to get through to Jenny that although she knew everyone in the store, that we were there to work and not to chat. Most of the support was practical. She wouldn't have managed without a job coach...Some people were a bit patronising. They'd say 'What a good job you're doing' I had to nip that one in the bud. People were generally a bit small-minded."

The other individual to receive job coach support from Project 2 was Sam working 32 hours at a nursing home as part of the SPS. Sam received four weeks support, but only two of those were intensive (equating to a total of 64 hours), and for two weeks the job coach visited the workplace every day for a reduced time each day. At one point the job coach returned to retrain Sam in a new aspect of the job for one week. However, at another point co-workers provided the retraining. The job coach described this particular job as *"a volatile situation"* for its whole duration.

Project 3

The five individuals in the sample from Project 3 received job coach support varying from two to five weeks: with an average of three weeks support. Standardised packages were offered of 2-3 weeks for those participating in a programme of job tasters. One individual received five weeks support even though no job analysis had been thought necessary because in the words of the job coach *"the job was too simple"*. Nevertheless, five weeks job support was considered necessary to instill work routine:

"Support involved teaching the job at the beginning, getting Derrick into a work routine. No job analysis, some jobs you just can't break down, where you have a fluctuating job you just can't break it down into bits. Task analysis was very basic, probably not worth writing down...He needed more support purely to tie him down. He needs a structure to tie him down. Had to instill in him that he had to take the initiative...He wanders off to something that looks more interesting to him."

Two individuals received three weeks intensive job support, one amounting to just under 80 hours in total, another to 100 hours. Even with this intensive support, one of these individuals had had to rely on his keyworker to intervene with the employer when a problem occurred:

"Why am I sorting the problem out? One of the problems with Project 3 was the job coach left soon after he started in the job and then there was a chap and then another one. What I've experienced with Bob is that things can escalate quite quickly. They don't know him like I do. I understand how he values the job and want to help him keep it."

In the second case where three weeks support was provided, the intensity was necessary because of the complexity of the job:

"He needed that level of support at the beginning because the place is like a warren. He had to learn his way around as well as learning the job task. The chemicals are poisonous so it's a very responsible job. As this was a job we had created, there were a few teething problems."

Two other individuals from Project 3 had received two weeks job coach support, one for 30 hours in total, another for 40 hours in total. After the two weeks, one of these individuals, Helen was withdrawn from the placement altogether, an event that attracted criticism from her keyworker, as discussed earlier. It seemed that this outcome could have been anticipated from the start:

"I anticipate there might be problems with her inappropriateness. Different tones of voice are required for the telephonists. It is difficult to teach people with learning disabilities what is an appropriate comment, they do not generalise to other situations. I may be able to stop her saying one particular thing but she will probably say something else equally inappropriate...The more difficult tasks are always the social ones."

In the second case, two weeks job support had been required to teach the work tasks and the travel to work route. Even so at the end of the six weeks assessment process Marie lost the job:

"At the end of the placement the employer felt she was unsuitable because she was tired and getting slower. She was unable to do some of the tasks such as filing...We wanted to try her out in an office environment. The job was too many hours. It was changed to suit her but there were stresses in the hostel...The lessons we've learned are that she needs self-advocacy and she needs structure to a job"

Individuals' Satisfaction with Job Support

On the whole individuals reported they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the support received from their job coach. That they were satisfied with job support and highlighted many areas that the job coach had helped them to find a job validates the procedures of supported employment. A common comment was that without such help, some would not have been in jobs:

"Yeah, I mean, without Project 1, I would most probably be still sitting in the house looking at a TV, it was them that gave me a sense of go for it, try."

However, as indicated above, one person (Project 1) had found the intensive 10 weeks support to be holding him back from performing the job independently:

"When I first started she was helping me a lot, but now 'cause there's nothing to learn ken, she doesn't have to really be there but I think she really just stays in case something goes wrong maybe."

(Project 1, 10 weeks job support)

Also as previously discussed, the residential keyworker of one individual, Helen (Project 3), who had lost her job after two weeks felt that the support provided had not been appropriate nor flexible enough to meet Helen's individual requirements. Only one individual identified himself that he had needed more help:

JR: And how do you feel about the help that you received from the job coach? Could you have done with any more help?

Bob: More help

JR: Could you? What sort of help would you need?

Bob: Just more training"

(3) JOB SATISFACTION

Inferences can be made from the above discussion in respect of the objective conditions of the supported employment jobs. However, 'job satisfaction' is a subjective phenomenon: it has been described as the relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering (Calkins et al, 1990). Seeking the subjective views of supported employees was therefore a critical measure of the 'quality' of supported employment jobs. The job satisfaction literature identifies five core characteristics of jobs that affect job performance, job satisfaction, motivation and turnover: these are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and job feedback. Moseley (1988) concluded that workers with disabilities and their non-disabled co-workers sought similar rewards from jobs and were motivated at work by the same things.

Basing questions on the most common facets of job satisfaction identified from research in business and industry, and the supported employment literature (Spector 1997; Test et al, 1993; Calkins & Walker, 1990; Moseley, 1988), individuals were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the following: the job task, hours, wages, working environment, work supervisor, co-workers, opportunities for socialising and with the job coach. This did not constitute a measure of job satisfaction in the accepted sense, but did provide a basic source of data for investigating consumers' direct experience of supported employment against such objective indicators as wages, and hours worked. During the interviews, individuals were also asked what they liked and disliked about their jobs.

Overall, the sample individuals reported having job satisfaction. However, six out of fourteen individuals interviewed were very dissatisfied with their jobs: five of the six had either lost or left their jobs, indicating a clear link between job dissatisfaction and job loss in supported employment. Nevertheless, job dissatisfaction did not directly relate to objective indicators such as low pay in all cases. Antecedents of job satisfaction can be classified into two main categories: 1) the job environment and factors associated with the job itself; and 2) the individual factors a person brings to the job, including personality and prior experience (Spector, 1997). It is not predictable how individual job characteristics such as pay, working conditions, number of hours etc. affect individuals' sense of job satisfaction. As Spector (1997) argued, job satisfaction is likely to be high when people are matched to jobs they prefer. Two factors emerged from the data in relation to job satisfaction and

supported employment: the characteristics of jobs and individuals' sense (or not) of performing 'meaningful work'.

Job Characteristics & Job Satisfaction

Four sets of job characteristics will now be referred to: job type and work environment, hours worked, pay, and opportunities for social integration. How these characteristics of the jobs related, if at all, to the job satisfaction of supported employees will be commented upon.

Job Type & Job Satisfaction

In the main, the sample individuals liked their job tasks and were satisfied with the jobs they had been offered, although this was not the case for everyone. Three people positively disliked the job task they had: Bill (Project 2), working as a general labourer, David (Project 1) whose job was sorting and tagging clothes in a warehouse, and Hugh (Project 1) who collected and washed mugs in a Bingo Hall, all disliked their jobs intensely. One had lost his job, another had decided to leave and the third remained employed but was actively seeking other work.

One aspect of dissatisfaction with job tasks was with unstructured tasks resulting in poor 'task identity' and confusion of role. Further, lack of variety in the task, and/or performing repetitive and monotonous tasks also caused dissatisfaction:

"At first it was interesting, it was something I'd never done before. But it's something since that you can't really be anything else, that's the limit to this job. There's no like, you couldn't actually go on for anything else. Like a lot of them done there they start at one thing then they go into something else. That doesn't happen with that job...I canna really say I've got a lot out of it because it's like I've done it all now and that's well you don't have to learn any more, it's not like you're still learning anything, it's really all the same now."

Some of the working conditions were uncomfortable, and were disliked because they were dirty or there were concerns about safety. This included having to load and unload a dishwasher that was situated in a small room with no natural light and artificial air conditioning; cleaning out horses' stables that were "smelly"; and having to clean so-called 'high risk' equipment. Overall, conflict of role and a lack of 'task identity' occurred when the job did not match well with individual preferences. David for example, had stated a preference for working within a retail setting and had taken a warehouse assistance position soon realising that he had a strong preference for customer service work that led to a feeling of general dissatisfaction with the job task.

Hours Worked & Job Satisfaction

Some were dissatisfied with working part-time hours, particularly when their jobs were for less than ten hours a week. Working shifts that included weekends was a minor dislike for one individual who was fitting his job around family life. Working part-time was a major source of job dissatisfaction for four individuals: three of who had been found jobs by Project 2. All expressed a desire to increase the number of weekly hours they worked, even though this would have been problematic from a benefits perspective for those living in a residential or supported accommodation setting.

Jenny's (Project 2) job of six hours a week in the supermarket provided several identifiable benefits but she remained dissatisfied with the number of hours, commenting that the job *"had not changed (my life) enough"*. Jim's (Project 2) dissatisfaction with working part-time was expressed less directly through his dislike for continuing to attend an ARC:

"When you sit doing nothing at the centre, sitting doing nothing. I do that all the time, nothing to do at the centre, nothing to do."

When asked whether he would prefer to work more hours he responded that he did and intended to see his boss about it. If Jim were to remain on benefits earning no more than the benefits disregard of £16, the implication of working for more than four hours would be losing any extra he earned, unless he were to work for therapeutic earnings. David's job (Project 1) was at the threshold of the definition of full-time work designated by the DoE, but this was not acceptable to either David or his family, who compared his job unfavourably with their understanding of a 'proper job', that is, working 30 hours or more:

"I think it wasn't enough hours, I was only doing 16 hours a week. Before I had been doing 35 hours (college placement). I want a full-time job rather than going in somewhere two days a week, doing a job then you're bored solid for the rest of the week."
(David)

"It definitely gave him a sense of purpose in life, something to get up for, but he needed more days. He needs something every day even if just half a day."
(Mother)

It would however, have been difficult for David to earn the £200+ a week that he needed for his supported accommodation and living costs. Bill's satisfaction with his full-time job at the sheltered factory contrasted with his feelings about the job he had lost which had been for 20 hours a week. The sheltered work came closer to his perception of a 'real job': *"The hours I'm on now are much better...It seems like you can come home and just have a seat"*. Although I had not interviewed two of the three people working under five hours, a comment from the residential keyworker of one of those also indicated that working so few hours *"did not really make a great impact on her life"*.

Pay & Job Satisfaction

As commented upon earlier, supported employment for most did not represent a way out of poverty. Earning potential was severely curtailed by the welfare benefits system, particularly if someone was living in supported accommodation or a residential setting. Any monetary gains from supported employment tended to be modest: wages, if paid at all, were in the region of £3 to £4 an hour. Nevertheless, a modest increase in income could still have a significant positive impact on someone's life:

"Having a job has given me a life. It's freedom. It's not stuck within four walls; you have a social life outside, not stuck inside. When you've got a job you can go out, do it, enjoy the job, come home, and forget about it. On your days off you've got money and you can go out and buy things, you can do what you like basically."
(Individual earning approximately £110 net per week)

The importance and satisfaction inherent in earning one's own money as opposed to claiming welfare benefits should also be acknowledged:

"It's like you're not really doing something to earn your money you know when you're on income support...It's (wages) only a small amount and it gives you a good feeling because you know you've done something to earn it."

Five people were dissatisfied with levels of pay: either the wages they received were too low (three people), or they did not receive any wages (two people). Bill (Project 2) who had lost his supported employment job now earned higher wages at the sheltered factory and consequently was more satisfied with sheltered employment. Mike (Project 1) had decided to leave his job in search of a job with better longer-term career prospects and better pay. Derrick (Project 3), who was paid £5 a week for 14 hours work was ambivalent: he had identified getting paid as an important part of having a job - *"It's all about getting money"* - but he also thought earning £5 was *"not bad"* in comparison with the £4 a week 'wages' he used to receive from the ARC some time ago.

Two people (Project 3) were dissatisfied with not receiving any wages. Although it was accepted that job placements were generally unpaid, one said, *"It annoys me at times I dinna get wages"*. When asked whether he had mentioned that he was unhappy about not being paid, Bob replied that he had spoken to someone who had told him that *"it wasn't usual"* to get paid jobs. His residential keyworker seemed to be of the same opinion: *"It would be fine if it was a paid job but it's so difficult to get these days"*. The other individual, who stated that she *"was not too bothered"* about getting paid, also identified having a wage as an expected outcome of supported employment and that she would like to earn money from a job.

Jobs with poor or no monetary rewards were tolerated for the sake of the intrinsic benefits they offered, or secondly, because individuals believed they did not have a right to earn money. Jobs with local employers, whether paid or unpaid, were important because they provided opportunities to meet other people outside of special services, they increased self-esteem and self-identity, offered

occupation doing something the person enjoyed and gave some control over life. Supported employment was therefore an important activity but the absence of pay meant that some jobs were not perceived as 'real jobs':

"It's become quite an important part of his life now although he doesn't see it as a job, it's still something he gets a lot out of."
(residential keyworker)

The justification for non-payment was often based upon professionals' low expectations that paid jobs could be secured or that certain individuals would be incapable of meeting the demands of paid jobs. Expectations differed when jobs were unpaid placements: poor work performance was sometimes tolerated because it was voluntary work. The following quotation from an interview with a job coach (Project 3) illustrates this. It is in relation to Derrick who was working for £5 a week:

"He's not under any pressure. Nobody is really bothering because they know he's never going to produce the same as the others...It wouldn't work out in a normal job. His benefits would be affected if he gave up a job after say six weeks. Because he's not getting paid a fortune whether they stop for five minutes and speak to Derrick is not important. The kind of guy he is, people do stop and talk. If they were getting paid he would be stopping others from their work and an employer would not be too pleased."

The view held by some supported employment staff, particularly in Project 3, that wages were not as important as other benefits was not always shared by supported employees.

Opportunities for Social Integration

Most identified meeting people at work (as co-workers, and as customers or the public) as an outcome of supported employment that they valued, even when they were dissatisfied with other outcomes such as pay or hours. Many times over the importance of working alongside non-disabled people was highlighted as a positive outcome. However, three individuals were dissatisfied in some way with the social relationships at work, either because there were too few opportunities to mix with other people, or it was different kinds of people they wanted to mix with.

Isolated job tasks that did not involve working alongside other co-workers resulted in dissatisfaction. For example, Hugh's job involved working physically separate from all other employees and he worked different shifts. He bemoaned the lack of contact with other people, especially as this was something he had specifically sought from supported employment. At the start of the research he had felt painfully isolated socially, spending the majority of time with his parents, either at home or out socialising with them, something he was keen to change through getting a job:

"I never seem to find people that I can talk to. I thought going to work that would happen but it's not. I'm quite disappointed...I thought it might have changed a lot of things."

However, because there had been no opportunities to make friends at work he was extremely disappointed with supported employment, and ultimately sought a change of job - *"It's no really*

changed very much if I really like to be honest. The only thing that's maybe changed is that I'm working now."

Meeting people at work was an important determinant of Derrick's satisfaction at work. What he most liked about his job was having *"a good laugh with the boys"*. This seemed to be linked to Derrick's sense of masculine identity according to his keyworker:

"Working with men is important for Derrick. He gets a lot out of being one of the boys or one of the men. He sees what he's doing as a man's type of job. He wouldn't consider like sweeping up as a job for a man...Perhaps it's important that he's in a male dominated group and that does something for his self-esteem...He very much identifies with male culture - the army, football, pubs, heavy metal music and the kind of work environment he's in"
(Residential keyworker)

The only aspect of his job that Derrick did not like was when some of his co-workers were moved to work at a different site. As his employer did not organise formal social activities during or after work time, there were no opportunities to meet with the other co-workers, some of whom Derrick classed as among his friends. Dissatisfaction with social opportunities at work also arose when one was surrounded by the 'wrong' people: for example, Mike sought to meet people through work but as a 21 year old male found it unsatisfactory when his co-workers were predominantly mature females. His preference was to work in future in an occupation that was male dominated.

Meaningful Jobs

Researchers have found that people are motivated by, and like their jobs when they find them 'meaningful' and enjoyable (Hackman & Oldman, 1980, 1976): concepts that are implicitly subjective. Barnes et al (1998) argued that meaningful activity is more important than the formal context in which it takes place. Some people stated that what they liked about their jobs was the challenge, task variety, and making a contribution. In chapter 5, supported employment professionals were shown to have effectively redefined the concept of 'real jobs' as 'meaningful jobs'. By this was meant a job with a local employer that would need to be done by someone, either for payment or on a voluntary basis. In this sense it was the task that held the meaning, and was therefore, different from the notion of 'meaningful jobs' deduced from individuals' accounts: this was where individuals perceived the tasks they performed as having meaning for them personally. Such meaning is acquired socially from other people and the culture at large (Baumeister, 1991), and is not an objective quality. For example, to any outside observer, Mike had one of the most varied and interesting jobs of the whole sample and yet he was bored and wanted to leave because in his eyes, the job lacked future career prospects. He envisaged finding 'meaningful' work in a higher status, higher paid job.

As has been discussed in chapter 1, work does not have the same meaning for everyone. Baumeister (1991) highlights three broad categories of work: as a job, a calling, and a career. The first refers to an instrumental activity, working for an income and the things an income makes possible without personal

involvement or satisfaction in the nature of the work. Work as a calling means it is done out of a sense of destiny or duty. Thirdly, work as a career is motivated by a desire for success and recognition. Such categorisation seemed helpful up to a point: the majority of individuals in this sample sought recognition through work, and many identified gains in terms of improved self-esteem, status or self-identity (see chapter 9), but the prestige from having a job was not often driven by obvious long-term career ambitions.

Some were drawn to particular lines of work. One had lost his job for a variety of reasons but had a basic conflict of 'task identity': from the start David had sought a job in retail but his job in the warehouse only strengthened his resolve to seek a customer service job in the same industry, similar to a college placement at a DIY store. Through supported employment, one individual had realised his 'ideal job', about which he commented *"there's no other job in the world that would compare to that."* The job offered variety, challenge and opportunities to make a contribution in other peoples' lives, even if sometimes that meant not leaving work exactly at finishing time, accepting low wages and some give and take with co-workers:

"There's always something to do, it might just be a variation on one thing...You can actually build a rapport with some of them (patients) and it eases their situation. I've met many people at work. When they thank you for doing such and such a thing, and sometimes offer you a tip and things like this, it makes you feel as though you're wanted."

Some people clearly found their jobs meaningless and the other benefits of working were sometimes not enough to maintain them in jobs:

*"Bill: You're going around finishing that job, had to keep going around after you'd done it..
JR: Did any of it feel good, like getting wages, or the fact that you had a job?
Bill: Didn't seem that way at all. It was wages, but the wages wasn't that good. The people were kind of like good to you...You're wandering around, you're sweeping up a bit and then the next minute you can't help it, it's all a mess again."*

SUMMARY

The stark reality of most supported employment meant part-time work (under 16 hours generally), low status 'entry-level' positions, and low pay. What was known about individual preferences and desires was not reflected overall in the objective conditions of supported employment jobs. It was true that some had wanted part-time work on the basis of ill health or for some other reason, but others had expected more from supported employment and were disappointed. They did not consider a part-time job (sometimes under 5 hours), or an unpaid one to be a 'real job', and neither did relatives or carers. Beyer et al (1996a) concluded that the national challenge for supported employment is helping more people to progress into paid work on higher hourly rates. However, working longer hours in itself is not necessarily an indicator of a 'quality' job, given that some people in this sample worked over 20 hours a week for no pay.

One of the determining factors of such outcomes is the inextricable link between the welfare benefits systems and housing as discussed in chapter 2. The findings support Simons' (1998) central argument that where people with learning disabilities live, directly affects their employment prospects: those who were living in supported housing or hostels, accessed wages comparable with benefits disregard amounts or less, while those living with family had potentially greater scope in respect of both the number of hours, and level of earnings and therefore, theoretically had more choice in the kinds of jobs they could accept.

The pattern traced in this chapter also shows that the way supported employment projects operate translates directly into particular outcomes: for example, if the predominant ethos is one of improving individuals' independent living and social skills as in Project 3, the outcome tends towards unpaid placements. In a project where the government sponsored programme is the predominant approach as in Project 2, supported employment options that do not attract the government wage subsidies tend to be for less hours (under 10), regardless of the severity of disability, and sheltered work opportunities are perceived to complement job options in integrated settings. This supports Stalker and Harris' (1998) assertion that choice is inhibited by the nature of services offered and the beliefs and attitudes of staff. In contrast, when a project such as Project 1 is keenly focused on securing paid jobs at the going-rate for the job in integrated settings, a broader range of paid jobs are found.

The limited data collected on job satisfaction showed that people with learning disabilities were not satisfied in dull, repetitive or boring tasks that offered little if any, opportunity for recognition or making a contribution. As Moseley (1988) argued workers with disabilities seek similar rewards from work as other people. Performance of supported employees was affected by the extent to which jobs were perceived to offer skill variety, task identity and significance in particular. So called 'meaningful jobs' are determined by the individuals concerned and the value they decide to place on work performed, not by objective factors identified by outsiders. Jobs lacking in structure or a clear job role are also a source of dissatisfaction. A number of people were dissatisfied with not receiving wages or with low pay, with working for a few hours only and with the lack of social integration opportunities.

Writers during the last five years have begun to stress the importance of supported employees determining their own support strategy, rather than leaving this to professionals to decide (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Hagner & Dileo, 1993). The support strategies described in this chapter were devised in the main by project staff, and delivered externally by job coaches rather than negotiated internally with co-workers or supervisors, although there had certainly been discussions and agreement with individuals. The amount of support varied not according to individual need but by project rather suggesting that the distribution of support resources was inequitable: the amount of support received depended upon where an individual lived as no local choice between supported employment projects

existed. There was only limited evidence of different kinds of support packages, incorporating for example 'natural' or 'personalised' support strategies involving other supporters centrally (Callahan & Garner, 1997).

The importance of involving consumers directly in the processes of supported employment especially job finding activities, has been convincingly argued (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Callahan & Garner, 1997; Hagner & Dileo, 1993), with a lack of ownership being shown to lead to lack of interest and commitment to the job, which in turn can result in job loss (Parent et al, 1998; Targett et al, 1998). It has also been shown that individuals will be more satisfied with jobs they have been involved in finding and that they will stay in those jobs for longer (Parent et al, 1996; Kregel et al, 1994). Also as suggested by the above discussion the reasons for losing jobs are multi-faceted and what may appear to be a good job-match at the start soon becomes unsuitable due to one or more aspect of the job not fitting with the person's implicit career objectives. These findings support those who argue that job matching is not a predictable or scientific process but one that requires a great deal of flexibility from employment specialists and a career-based approach.

CHAPTER 9

THE MEANING OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TO INDIVIDUALS

INTRODUCTION

Initially researchers measured the outcomes of supported employment in terms of wages, job retention and cost-benefit outcomes. In the previous chapter, such objective outcomes were examined alongside individuals' subjective job satisfaction while in this chapter, more attention is paid to what Mank (1994) alluded to as the broad changes in peoples' lives and the meaning supported employment had for them. Changes in quality of life cannot necessarily be claimed as a direct consequence of supported employment, but there are work-related outcomes that can be measured such as a structure and purpose imposed by having a job and friends made through work. While researchers have focused at length on measuring how well supported employees fitted in at work or 'vocational integration' (Parent et al, 1992a,b; Wertheimer, 1992a; Parent et al, 1991; Sandow & Olson, 1991), the broader impact on individuals' social relationships remains relatively unexplored, except to show that many supported employees remain on the periphery of the work environment and very rarely socialise with other employees outside work (Knox & Parmenter 1993). This chapter focuses on the individual outcomes of supported employment reported by 14 individuals with learning disabilities, their carers and professionals who took part in a second interview approximately 9-10 months after the initial interview, and finally, comments on the longer term plans made for individuals against more recent ideas of supported employment as a 'career'.

OUTCOMES OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

The outcomes of supported employment for 14 individuals were examined through interviews with supported employees, their relatives or carers, and project staff, and were compared with what they had hoped the experience would be like. Data were compared using seven summary categories which had previously been used (see chapter 6) to describe expectations: a) vocational integration; b) financial gain; c) better social life; d) self-esteem; e) sense of purpose; f) skill acquisition; and g) status. Although these same categories appear in this analysis, it was also necessary to expand the categorisation in order to do justice to what people said. On the whole, research exploring the outcomes of supported employment has been from the perspectives of professionals, while in this study the focus was primarily on the subjective experiences of people with learning disabilities. In

Table 12 below individuals’ perceptions are set alongside those of relatives or carers, and project staff and in the text that follows, comparison and contrast is made between different viewpoints.

Table 12: Number of Users, Carers and Project Staff Identifying Specific Outcomes from Supported Employment at the Second Stage Interviews

<i>SPECIFIC OUTCOME</i>	<i>Number of Users (N=14)</i>	<i>Number of Carers (N=11)</i>	<i>Number of Project Staff (N=13)</i>
Vocational Integration	12	6	8
Being Busy	10	4	-
Financial Gain	9	2	8
Self Esteem	9	8	6
Doing Something You Enjoy	8	1	3
Better Social Life	7	-	-
Sense of Purpose	6	4	6
Control	6	1	-
Independence	6	2	3
Skill Acquisition	5	5	3
Structure	4	2	2
Normality/Integrated Workplaces	4	3	5
Work Experience	4	1	2
Status	3	6	5
Being Happier/Well-Being	1	5	1

Overview

Authors cited in the literature review in chapter 1 questioned whether work could in fact deliver all that was generally expected of it (Meadows, 1996; Baumeister, 1991). The table above suggests that supported employment does deliver the range of positive outcomes generally expected of it, although the ‘quality’ of individuals’ experiences vary, and as the last chapter showed, different outcomes are associated with different project approaches. Some job situations provided all or most of the above outcomes for the individuals concerned while others provided few benefits so that the impact on an individual’s life was minimal. What this distinction meant in terms of individuals’ lives will be examined below. Outcomes sometimes exceeded expectations, in the sense that there were more individuals who highlighted particular outcomes than had initially hoped for this as a consequence of

supported employment. In chapter 6, five main work objectives were attributed to the individuals in this study. These were to:

1. meet and work with non-disabled people
2. earn an income
3. increase self-confidence and self esteem
4. make a meaningful contribution
5. have opportunities to learn new things

In global terms, these objectives were clearly met, although as already indicated not every supported employee earned an income, nor had many opportunities to mix with others at work, or undertook work tasks that were enjoyable or personally meaningful. In the following analysis, outcomes are discussed under six main categories which correspond to the work objectives above, as well as to the expected outcomes discussed in chapter 6: social integration, financial gain, sense of purpose, self esteem, status, and skill acquisition.

Table 12 shows that all types of participants highlighted similar kinds of outcomes from supported employment, but if one ranks the first six for each participant type, a difference in priorities appears: while individuals with learning disabilities, carers and project staff all identified vocational integration and self esteem, people with learning disabilities in particular focused on 'doing something one enjoys', wages and 'having a better social life'. Carers on the other hand were more likely to mention the intrinsic benefits such as increased happiness and status, while project staff were more likely to emphasise the importance of gaining a 'sense of normality' from working in integrated settings.

Supported employment researchers who surveyed over 100 individuals found that a large percentage could identify major life events or changes, such as moving away from home, getting married or entering a long-term relationship that had coincided with taking up supported employment (Parent et al, 1996). That the present study was only able to follow up 10 months after the start of supported employment does somewhat limit its ability and authority to draw similar conclusions, but even after 10 months, it clearly had had a profound impact on some peoples' lives, and a disappointing one (from the individual's perspective) on others. The major life changes for some included moving into the community from hospital or leaving home for the first time, while for others it had been the first step towards greater independence and control over their lives. In order to examine what the impact on individuals had been, the analysis will follow the outcome data categories highlighting themes from individuals' situations, and then present brief synopses of the outcomes for each supported employee.

Social Integration

Working in integrated or local business is generally believed to increase community participation, and the likelihood of developing meaningful relationships with non-disabled people (McLoughlin et al, 1987; Nisbet & Callahan, 1987; King's Fund Centre, 1984). This remains one of the most influential reasons for developing supported employment (see chapter 1 & 3). It can also increase individuals' self-confidence and enhance the skills needed for making friends, and hence have more far reaching implications for social integration. Social integration is so central to models of quality of life in respect of people with learning disabilities that Jahoda et al (1990) argued services should focus more on improving opportunities for social integration. Significantly, the commonest expectation that people with learning disabilities in this study had of supported employment was that it would enable them to meet non-disabled people and potentially offer a different source of friends (see chapter 6).

Research on the social integration outcomes of supported employment to date has been challenging: for some people supported employment seems to have led to richer social lives, while for others, it has meant little or no opportunity to extend social relationships. It has been suggested that the discrepancies in reported social interaction patterns may relate to the practice of presenting measures of social integration as group averages, which may obscure important factors of social integration such as a familiar co-worker, a supportive boss, or a workplace policy that inhibits social interaction (Hughes et al, 1998). Analysing findings by individual employee rather than groups may help to identify such situation-specific factors and may pinpoint previously unexamined variables relating to better social integration outcomes. Even the meanings given to 'social integration' are imperfect: Chadsey-Rusch et al (1997), who looked at the meaning of social integration from a range of perspectives, found a lack of consensus about what constitutes social integration. They concluded supported employees themselves must make the final decision on desired social integration outcomes. The following account therefore, focuses primarily on the individuals' perspectives.

At the second stage interviews, individuals and carers were asked about new interests, activities or friends that had arisen for each individual since starting supported employment. At the start of the research, a full picture was presented of the composition of individuals' social networks, what activities they were engaged in and the nature of social support before supported employment (see chapter 7). It was found that formal and informal supporters set the parameters of choice and that lack of autonomy regarding money, as well as not having the means to afford to do very much, limited their social lives. The social networks of those living in residential settings tended to be self-contained and individuals mainly spent their time with other people with learning disabilities and paid supporters. They had few, if any, non-disabled friends and they saw relatives infrequently.

Some of those living at home with parents also had self-contained networks containing mainly immediate relatives and a few paid supporters, while others had more embracing social networks that included a wide range of relatives, non-disabled and disabled friends, non-disabled acquaintances as well as paid supporters. It was concluded that the most limiting factors in the development of their social lives overall, were both lack of integrative opportunities and a lack of money. Very few peoples' lives were dominated by 'special activities', but the greatest proportion of time was spent in 'isolated activities' such as watching TV or videos, visiting relatives, or playing music. The types of activities they engaged in generally did not offer many opportunities for social interaction with other people outside the confines of already restricted networks of family, friends and paid supporters.

The approach to examining social integration in this research was predominantly qualitative, but a standardised measure of vocational integration (Virginia Commonwealth University -the Vocational Integration Index or VII) also provided a proxy measure of the vocational integration of different workplaces and the opportunities available to supported employees (see chapter 4). Workplace observations, although originally planned, had not been possible for a number of reasons mainly to do with the ethics of the observation role in integrated employment settings, and the time available for fieldwork. VII proformas were completed for eleven individuals in all (that is, five individuals from Project 1; three from Project 2; and three from Project 3), but not for those who had either opted out of the research (three individuals) and/or left supported employment altogether.

The most often mentioned outcome from supported employment was having friends at work and mixing with non-disabled people (12 individuals): significantly more than was identified by carers (6) and project staff (8). Workplace friendships that were clearly valued by supported employees were less evident to outsiders, possibly because it was rare for such friendships to be evident in any other setting. The description of the 'quality' of relationships established varied considerably, as did satisfaction with this aspect of supported employment jobs. Opportunities for integration have been found to vary between different workplaces and are affected by a range of factors: the type of job and number of hours worked (Beyer et al, 1996b); staffing patterns, work schedules, the physical environment, work policies and the social characteristics of the job site (Parent et al, 1992b); and workplace culture (Hagner, 1993).

People at work are thus an important part of the 'quality' experience for supported employees. Similar to the layers of relationships at work distinguished by Hagner and Dileo (1993), three generalised types of work-based relationships were discernable: (1) 'work-mates' (or people with whom supported employees regularly interacted usually regarding work topics); (2) 'work friends' (typically people with whom supported employees interacted informally during breaks and at other times); and (3) 'social friends' (referring to people who were friends at work but who also spent some non-work time with supported employees). As well as the types of relationships, a number of other themes emerged

from the data in relation to social integration: being present but not participating, or 'in' but 'not of', the work culture; social acceptance; the relevance of team-based working; and the differential integration potential inherent in different workplaces.

Present But Not Participating

For some people being in employment meant they were present in ordinary workplaces but they were not benefitting a great deal in terms of mixing with non-disabled people in that they had not made any friends at work. This was the reality for two people in particular, who had identified meeting people at work as an outcome of supported employment but shown through discussion that relationships with co-workers were somewhat at a distance. Marie for example, had worked for six weeks as a clerical assistant in an office environment where several other people were employed, and while she said that most were "*friendly*" she tended to describe these workplace relationships as "*just meet other folk at work*" and there was no-one whom she mentioned by name that she had struck up a friendship with. Her presence in an integrated workplace had not changed the scope of her social network in any way as she continued to rely mostly on her parents, the hostel staff and other residents for social support. Also the pattern of her activities remained unchanged over the period of the study, apart from taking up knitting. One of the reasons that Marie had not socialised with co-workers outside work seemed to be practical: "*It's a bit far to go in and go out with them you know. Bit to far for me to go in and come back out again*"

Although Bill had been sacked from his SPS job as a general labourer on account that he was "*talking too much*" and also as the project put it, "*slacking on the job*", he identified one of his dissatisfactions with the job as being its isolation. He came into contact with other employees, but only in the passing: "*The people were kind of good to you. There was folks that would say 'hello, how are you getting on?' "*". Again, his social network remained unchanged by supported employment. Unlike Marie, Bill lived at home with his parents and sister and already had several non-disabled friends and acquaintances in his life, and he took part in a number of 'socially-integrative' activities. From the start it had been the instrumental benefits of working that had attracted Bill to supported employment, which is partly why the superior wages from the sheltered factory work seemed to suit him better. Nonetheless, the social isolation of the job was a negative aspect for him, which suggests that social acceptance was more important.

Social Acceptance

Tentatively it is suggested that some of the interviewee's comments indicated that they experienced social acceptance at work. Having work friends contributed to a sense of a positive atmosphere and made the experience of work both enjoyable and meaningful to the individual:

"They're not bad at all. My boss is a nice man, he's a happy man. Says 'how are you getting on?' 'No bad at all' I'll say."

(Jim)

"We get on great; I get on great with them. I've got friends that I get on with and they're nice people to get on with, we always have a good laugh together."

(Derrick)

Paid supporters (keyworkers) for both Jim (Project 2) and Derrick (Project 3), viewed their jobs as unique situations, expressing doubts that they would 'fit in' in any other workplace, and in Derrick's case the job was not considered to be a 'real job', albeit still an important part of his life. Jim worked as a part-time cleaner for an employer who provided support services for people with disabilities in the community. His place of work was a small office where only three other people worked including its Chief Executive. Derrick was working for a charitable company involved in recycling who employed several other people with disabilities or individuals from government training schemes. Both employers were predisposed to providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities: in fact Jim's employer had approached Project 2 when a vacancy had arisen. For both men, contrast was made between the job and their experiences at the day centre, and an acknowledgement of the benefits in respect of self-esteem and the different status of working in a "non-disabled environment" as being the most significant benefit.

Jim's social network was still dominated by paid supporters and his sister whom he saw infrequently, but he now had different social experiences on account of having work friends: he felt a sense of belonging and that he had a valued role to perform. As a valued member of this company, he had been invited with the other office staff to the Christmas meal. His residential keyworker had been anxious that Jim's general behaviour might affect his relationships at work and this had not been the case. This is not surprising though, as 20 years of research has shown that individuals with no prior work experience and who have previously displayed what staff call 'inappropriate or challenging behaviours', can succeed in competitive employment situations with proper support (Kregel, 1998).

The distinction between 'work-mates' and 'work friends' lay in the extent to which co-workers engaged in friendly conversation and took an interest in supported employees, for example through exchanging views on leisure interests, sharing a joke, enquiring about the whereabouts of the supported employee, having lunch together, celebrating another employee's birthday or a leaving do. For example:

"The other day there was somebody leaving and she just asked me 'would you like to put something in, donate something for them' and I did that."

(John, Project 1)

"We had our lunch together, sit and talk. I'm going to meet one of them for coffee next week"

(Sam, Project 2, after she had lost her job)

Having a better social life was identified as an outcome by only half of the interviewees at the second stage, and only three of those referred to having made social friends at work. This supports the claim that workplace friendships for supported employees do not necessarily alter the quality of life beyond the work setting. None of the carers or project staff interviewed identified changes in any individual's social life, although it might have been a different story had a carer for Pete for example, been interviewed. What the three had in common was that their jobs required them to work closely with other co-workers, some of whom had the same job role, and they were all providing a public service: Pete (Project 1) worked as a hospital porter, and both John (Project 1) and Sam (Project 2) were domestic assistants in homes for older people. The development of work-based friendships for the individuals in the study sample was therefore contingent to an extent, upon team-based work cultures. Work-groups provided an almost ready-made social group.

The new relationships with Pete's co-workers were characterised by reciprocity in that co-workers would borrow money and grant each other favours, as Pete put it knowing *"the favour will be returned in some way or other."* At the first interview it was clear that Pete already had several non-disabled friends in his life, as well as family members. However, his activities were restricted through lack of money and low self-esteem. Within 10 months people from work had become good friends, some of whom he socialised with on a regular basis and who had also become sources of emotional and financial as well as social support. The pattern of activities in Pete's life had changed from predominantly 'isolated activities' to 'socially integrative activities'. In his words - *"having a job has given me a life"*.

The changes in John's life as a result of making friends at work, had perhaps been less dramatic, but nonetheless significant in his life. The pattern of activities had changes in that there were now less specialist activities and fewer paid supporters as well as more non-disabled people in his circle of participation, but his wife and family remained the main sources of social support. Nevertheless, the social aspect was important to John. He particularly enjoyed working with people and making a contribution in their lives through his work. As where he worked was local, he regularly came across other employees at the shops or socialising in the local pub. Other factors, including having a young family and on account of finishing shifts at different times than his friends, meant *"I've been meeting people at work and they've been asking me out but I've no had the chance to do that yet"*.

It was probably too early on in many cases to determine whether work friendships would eventually develop into social friends, and hence constitute a more positive measure of community participation as a result of supported employment. Even if work friends had not yet become social friends, mixing

with others at work sometimes broadened social experience and consequently increased self confidence in other social settings, as it had for Mike (Project 1), for example:

"Before I used to be like shy and lonely, since I started working, I've kinda come oot of my shell quite a bit and got more sociable and talkative."

The Integration Potential of Different Workplaces

The subjectivity of work settings calls for an examination of each individual workplace. In the absence of collecting naturalistic data from workplace observations, prior research findings which have identified indicators of integration such as those conceptualised in the Virginia Commonwealth University's Vocational Integration Index (VII) in terms of the integration features of individual workplaces and opportunities available to supported employees were considered. Using the VII, patterns across individuals and across each of four types of indicator (company, work area, employee and benefits) were explored. Originally it was planned that the VII results would be discussed in interviews with individual supported employees, but as several VIIs were not completed by the projects in time to do this it was not done. The results have not been taken as absolute measures of integration, especially as the individuals did not validate them.

One initial observation was that reports of having work friends or social friends from the individual interviews did not necessarily equate with high scores on all four type of indicators of the VII, apart from the Employee Indicators: that is, those that referred to similar workdays for all employees; regular employee interactions; organised social events during and outside work; and the general atmosphere of the workplace. This might suggest that the atmosphere of workplaces and camaraderie between employees, including recognition of employees' special or personal events (birthdays, anniversaries, leaving etc), and the amount of socialising outside work time, has as much, if not more, to do with the composition of the workforce. Certainly 'good' employers set the scene for positive relationships to develop between employees by providing formal and informal benefits, beneficial working conditions, and places for social interaction to occur, but clearly that is only part of the story. Also, where opportunities for making friends were felt by supported employees to be poor, the corresponding scores for Employee Indicators on the Consumer Scale tended to be low compared with the Job Scale, which suggests that supported employees did not always benefit from potentially integrative employment situations and were being excluded from the social fabric of work.

Two individuals who reported work friends and social friends scored high on both the Job and Consumer Scales for items contained in Employee Indicators. To provide some context for this, John (Project 1) worked as a domestic assistant in a local authority home for older people. His employer scored high on all the Company and Benefit Indicators, providing many opportunities for all employees to interact socially during work and supporting social events. John's work pattern followed the same schedule as at least one other person. One of John's original concerns had been how an

employer would react to his epileptic fits should he suffer a fit at work, and it had already been demonstrated that his supervisor and co-workers were flexible and supportive of John's health needs. Although social events through work were rare, whenever they did occur, John was always involved. He received pay commensurate with other employees and enjoyed some paid holidays and sick leave. Social interactions included arrangements between employees to take a tea break at the same time as residents, he and his wife attending a special party for one of the residents, and contributing to an employee's leaving present and farewell.

Another supported employee, Pete (Project 1), who reported having both work and social friends, worked in the health service as a hospital porter. The NHS Trust employer scored high on Work Area and Employee Indicators on the VII, but extremely low on Company and Benefit Indicators. There were no company sponsored social activities, few fringe benefits with the job, the general salary for hospital porters has allegedly declined over the years, and there were only limited opportunities for career advancement. However, teamwork was a feature of the job, high public contact and a sense of making a valued contribution to the well being of the patients. From the discussion of job satisfaction in chapter 8, it was clear that Pete derived much job satisfaction from his sense of making a meaningful contribution to society, and that this compensated in large part, for some of the negative aspects of the job. Employees themselves were predisposed to organising social events at work as well as regular social outings. Camaraderie amongst the employees contributed to Pete's job satisfaction, and a sense of not only having friends at work, but having expanded his social support network and range of activities.

In some jobs, social integration seemed to be poor as a result of certain features of the company/employer, including those offering meagre work benefits and employee supports, and specific characteristics of individual jobs such as how isolated it was. Hugh's (Project 1) job for instance, as a kitchen porter in a Bingo Hall, scored consistently low on the Job Scale, but the scores for the Consumer Scale were even lower, suggesting that Hugh did not take full advantage of all the opportunities available. Benefit Indicators were high, including entitlement to paid holidays and paid sick leave, as well as opportunities for advancement within the company. In reality the job seemed to Hugh like a 'dead end' as there was no clear progression within the company after the manager who had initiated the incentive scheme left. Opportunities for interacting socially during work and breaks were almost non-existent as Hugh worked in isolation and worked different shifts than all other employees of the company. The lack of social integration opportunities was a major disappointment - *"My social life hasn't changed because I don't know anybody"*. To rub salt in the wounds, the company occasionally sponsored social activities but Hugh had been so far excluded, staff meetings had been missed because the communication was posted on staff notice boards and no one had thought to communicate with Hugh directly, and although some employees did meet after work, they never included Hugh. Not only did the job not meet his overriding need for friends by its structured isolation

within the company, it added to his lack of subjective well-being - *"They maybe don't think the job is really like well, not important enough"*.

The nature of many jobs found through supported employment, in that they were part-time, entry level positions, and were sometimes unpaid inevitably attracted less favourable employment conditions. Jenny's (Project 2) part-time job of under 5 hours a week for instance, did involve contact with the public and interacting with other employees especially when she was bagging shopping at the checkouts, but the majority of employees working that shift were middle-aged women. Jenny considered other employees and her supervisors as work friends, but had not invited anyone from work to celebrate her 21st birthday, as *"they're too old"*. Derrick's (Project 3) job was consistently low on all indicators for both the Job and Consumer Scales. Further, the differentials between scores on the Job and Consumer Scales suggested that he was treated differently than other employees. Derrick regularly left his work area to socialise with other employees, a practice that was tolerated because the position was badly paid - *"I've got friends that I get on with and we have a good laugh"*. Employees did not organise social events at work, nor did they get together outside work. The work benefits of the job scored low because the pay was low and there were no paid holidays or sickness pay, nor any opportunities for advancement in the company.

Outcome - Financial Gain

To recap the second commonest user-expectation of supported employment at the start of the research was that there would be financial gains (8 individuals), and it was the most important expected outcome overall. In chapter 8 the financial gains from supported employment were on the whole shown to be modest, several were either not paid at all or received nominal payments. In addition, some were working for the amount of benefits disregard or for therapeutic earnings, both of which place restrictions on the maximum amount someone can earn. Low wages or not being paid was specifically identified as a source of individual dissatisfaction for five people. In spite of this, nine individuals highlighted financial gains as a positive outcome of supported employment. Even when other aspects of the job were unsatisfactory, earning money at least *"put a bit more money in my pocket than before I worked"*.

Many people mentioned financial gain as an outcome of supported employment, regardless of the level of pay received. The wage slip or pay cheque, especially for those who had never earned any money before, conveyed value in itself and was a mark of appreciation:

"I said to my mum, I got paid mum, it feels good"
(Jenny)

"Somebody comes and gives me a wage slip you know and just says 'You've done a rare job, there's your wage'." (John)

Then there was the independence and control earning one's own money brought with it - *"At least I had money and I could go up the town and get a couple of CDs and go the pictures"*. It was the first time in Mike's life that he had been able to save. During the interview he dwelt on what it felt like to receive a payslip knowing that his wages were being paid into the bank:

"It's good to get your payslip handed to you and see how much you've earned. I usually go to the bank every Saturday so it's good to see how much you've got in. I started off with £20 in my bank, and now I've got about £600."

(Mike)

It was highlighted both by users and to an extent, project staff, but rarely by relatives or carers, which suggests carers did not consider the financial outcomes to be of significance. Carers focused on the intrinsic benefits they perceived the individual to have gained, such as increased self-esteem and happiness. This is not surprising given the reported ambivalence carers felt about money at the start: carers (particularly paid supporters), did not expect the financial gains to be a critical success factor, either because wages were going to be low or even non-existent on account of the welfare benefits trap, or because they generally placed a higher premium on the intrinsic benefits to be gained from supported employment. What carers and project staff had clearly underestimated was just how important earning £15 (benefits disregarded) was to individuals who normally had so little personal money.

Outcome - Sense of Purpose

A number of sub-categories developed from the data have been grouped together under 'sense of purpose': these were, having a sense of purpose, being occupied or busy, and having structure to the day, week, month. In supported employment literature, having a purpose is inextricably linked to introducing a structure or pattern into one's life that reflects cultural norms (McLoughlin et al, 1987; Wolfensberger, 1972). Relatives and carers anticipated major gains as a result of introducing a 'normal' structure into peoples' lives, but few carers identified having a sense of purpose as an outcome. One reason for the discrepancy could be explained by the part-time nature of many of the supported employment jobs and the more limited impact on patterns of life than had been anticipated. Only in full-time jobs (or at least those over 16 hours) was the classic analysis of supported employment lending structure to the day or week reflected in individuals' comments:

"I work five days out of seven and my few days off that's what I enjoy. You appreciate them all the more when you get a long weekend off"

(Pete, Project 1)

Being busy or well occupied was highlighted by a relatively high number of individuals. Eight individuals also stated that supported employment involved a task that they enjoyed. One might conclude that the engagement and activity in integrated employment was preferable to the kinds of

activities experienced in segregated day centres. It meant individuals had a valuable role in life, an identity:

"It's better than sitting in the house all day doing nothing, just sitting twiddling your thumbs or hanging around street corners. Gets me out of one routine sitting watching TV all day. It's better getting a job really better."
(David, Project 1)

Individuals with learning disabilities generally were concerned with making a contribution and having a valued role in life, which might also be implied from the greater value they placed upon having an integrated job. Neither carers nor professionals highlighted the importance of being busy in quite the same way.

Outcome - Self Esteem

One of the expected benefits of supported employment is positive well-being or self-esteem, although the relationship between work and well-being is not always straightforward. The image most often projected to others of people with learning disabilities is of someone who is a dependent service recipient. Individuals so labelled are often acutely aware of how others perceive them differently, and as shown in chapter 3, the aspiration to work in 'real jobs' in ordinary workplaces is in part an attempt to be ordinary and live a 'normal' life like other people. Without adopting a standardised measure of self-esteem for reasons discussed in chapter 4, positive differences were found in the way supported employees thought about themselves at this stage. Often this was expressed in terms such as, having a job *"makes me feel good about myself"* or feeling more self-confident as a result of being employed:

"My confidence within myself grew and my confidence in the job has grown too. If anybody asked me before I started the job to socialise then I'd probably make a big deal out of it, but now it's no big deal."
(Mike, Project 1)

This was an identified outcome by nine individuals almost double those who had expected this would be the case. Table 12 shows that a high proportion of all types of participant highlighted gains in this area. What is different is that many more people with learning disabilities identified changes in self-esteem as an actual outcome than those who had anticipated such a change at the start of the research. This will add weight to arguments for the intrinsic benefits of integrated employment and is in contrast to some research findings which have indicated that comparison with non-disabled people led people with 'mild learning disabilities' to undervalue themselves (Szivos, 1993). The difference between outcome and expectation probably reflects a general lack of experience more than anything else, in that lack of experience would make it difficult to know what to anticipate from having a job. Carers were also more likely than either users or project staff, to report an increase in the person's happiness as a result of starting in a job. Often knowing the individual better than anyone else, they were in a unique position to be able to make this observation.

"He's much happier and there was a big drop in his seizures for a while, and I felt it was because he was more relaxed"

(John's Carer)

Outcome - Increased Status

Perceived status gained from being a 'worker' rather than a service recipient, an outcome related to self-esteem, was a benefit more observed or recognised by others, than by supported employees about themselves. Those who identified changes in status spoke in respect of the effects of wearing company uniforms, having a framed photograph from work at home, or talking with a sense of pride about their jobs to friends and family: *"I'm proud to have a job. Tell my friends that I've got a job and things."* (Sam, Project 2). Related to the notion of adult status as discussed in chapter 6, was the notion of normality gained from having a real job. This was explicitly valued by some individuals, but recognised more as a valuable outcome by relatives or carers and professionals:

"It's important for him to be a breadwinner. He's a guy who wants to work and earn money for his family. Even though he has seizures in the night, he still gets up and goes to work."

(John's job coach)

Carers and professionals had hoped that the experience of having a job would result in increased independence, particularly in the case of young adults who, it was thought, needed to mature. No one with learning disabilities had identified this as an expected outcome of supported employment. Despite this, nearly half supported employees reported increased independence in some way as a result of having a job. Often this was in relation to doing something external to the family as a stepping-stone to greater independence and control over their lives. Several were seriously considering independent living arrangements in the future: *I don't want to stay at home, I'd like to stay in a place by myself".* Another had moved from his parents' home into supported accommodation around the same time as starting his job. Interestingly few carers or professionals recognised any gains in independence. A related concept, having control over one's life, was particularly significant for individuals, while carers and professionals made no mention of it. The concept of independence for people with learning disabilities was in relation to having control over their lives, while for parents and professionals; it had been about the notion of maturity:

"You can work out your own life. You're not relying on everybody to do things for you. It gives you a sense of independence, like setting your own alarm to get up for work. Work teaches you to do things for yourself. Although you work in a group, you're on your own most of the time, there's not someone there to say 'go and do this or that', and you have to do it for yourself. It gives you that feeling of independence...Making your own decisions"

(Pete, Project 1)

The identity of being a worker, the status of having a job rather than a service recipient, had most significance for individuals living in institutional settings. Supported employment had not had a dramatic impact on their social world to the same extent as for some who were living independently or

with parents: hostel residents continued to spend the vast majority of their time with other people with learning disabilities and paid staff in special environments (hostel, day centre, special social clubs, etc). Nonetheless, having a job meant that they were able to participate outside the world of disability services with non-disabled people. One residential keyworker referred to an individual's interactions with staff in particular as 'hostel mode', and reflecting on the changes in quality of life for Tom (Project 1) as a consequence of supported employment, elaborated in the following way:

"I don't know if anything has changed all that much, maybe that's because we're in a closed environment. It's almost as if he's a different character when he's down there, more open. He gets on really well with the other guys and they accept him. He's obviously found a niche. He hasn't changed very much in the way he relates here, he's not more confident in the way he deals with staff. I'm always dubious though, people here have a way they relate to staff and residents and sometimes outside they are different people."

Outcome - Skill Acquisition

Having a job arguably enhances the competency of individuals with learning disabilities and subsequently it is believed, improves their quality of life. Wolfensberger's (1972) seven core themes of normalisation includes personal competency, and was also reflected in the writings of Marc Gold. Basically these authors argued that the more competent a person became, the more accepted they would be by others. Increasing an individual's competency through employment is accorded high significance in the principle of normalisation. Through employment, it is argued, individuals with disabilities will acquire skills that will enhance their value within society (McLoughlin et al, 1987).

There were some gains in this area identified by the different participants, but skill acquisition was not a major recognised outcome in this study. Five individuals highlighted gains in skills in a number of areas that were mainly work-related, but also skills in independent living and social skills. It has for instance, been shown above that self-confidence gained in a work setting can enhance an individual's skills in other social interactions. However, it is doubtful that the skills gained through working actually led to acceptance in other areas of the individual's life: being perceived as skilled at work did not necessarily result in a perception that the individual was more competent overall. A number of supported employees, for example, had aspirations to move into more independent living situations but it was not uncommon for residential staff in particular, to refer to the person as being 'not ready' in some way, as in the following quotation:

"He could move to a more independent living environment but certainly not in the near future. We've been impressed by how he's handled the job but it's not had much of a knock on effect in here...He gets a lot out of his job. He's not however tested in other ways as such. He would need to be able to do a lot of other things. He's got more responsibilities...I think we'd hope to improve on that, responsibility is part of life for all of us. I think he could move on but it's a long way off. There's various things he's able to do, self-care, travel etc, but things about money and cooking are areas he would need to extend on to get a base just to be out there."

(Residential Keyworker for Tom)

Most Important User-Defined Outcome

To complement the first stage interviews, individuals were again asked to rank the outcomes they had identified into one top outcome. Although not everyone could identify one, the most common hoped-for outcome from supported employment had been to earn money (see chapter 6). When interviewed a second time, more individuals (7) ranked financial benefits as the most important outcome of supported employment, even where earnings were very little - *"I love getting paid"*; *"It's real work, it's a good wage"*; *"Getting money for the job you do"*. Such responses characterised supported employment as a job offering instrumental benefits which enabled people to do other things with their lives, despite the obvious intrinsic benefits received, as mentioned above, but also the importance of receiving pay in relation to self-esteem and perceived status.

Other outcomes highlighted among the most important to individuals were feeling good about oneself or improved self esteem, working in an integrated setting as opposed to sheltered employment, and having a purpose in life. Doing something one enjoyed was the most important outcome for two people; while having a job at all was most important to one person, and social integration the most important outcome for another.

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

The future aspirations expressed by individuals, relatives or carers, and project staff, and the extent of long-term planning in supported employment were explored through interviews, especially whether projects were adopting the kind of 'career-based' approach advocated in the recent literature. Other research has found that job placement in supported employment can very often be perceived as final, and support as temporary, with less attention paid to long term career plans (Pumpian et al, 1997). The shift from supporting jobs to supporting careers in recent years reflects changing expectations (Wehman & Kregel, 1998; Mank, 1994). An emphasis on long-term strategies is favoured on the basis that it better reflects the norm: for example, the Mental Health Foundation (1996) argued that supported employment jobs should not be assumed to 'be for life' on the supposition that the majority of people take a long time to find the most appropriate job for them. In summary, only a few individuals had longer-term plans and the predominant strategy concerned maintaining individuals in current job placements as far as possible. Differences in approach were found between the projects however, relating to their philosophies and emphases, which will now be examined below.

Project 1

Project 1 accepted that some individuals would either lose, or want to change jobs, given that they had arrived at supported employment with limited experience of work. This process was dubbed the 'revolving door syndrome' by the project manager and is discussed in chapter 5. Three individuals from Project 1 were looking for other jobs at the second stage interviews, one having lost his job, another had left a job, and the third while still in work was unhappy. The project's approach was essentially to extend vocational profiling, building on previous knowledge and using the job experience in redefining the individual's work objectives:

"We're going to develop another job for him. We're looking at different job options with him. Need to look more closely at the job options and get him more involved this time in deciding the work environment he wants to work in etc. People's first job invariably comes from us. He's now quite clear that he wants full-time work and the kind of work he wants."
(Project 1 Worker speaking about Mike)

However, it could still be difficult to accept giving up a job that the project has worked hard to maintain: *"He cannot just take, take, take. We have the same conversations over again. We don't want to persuade him to stay in the job all the time, it's his choice whether to stay in the job or not: it's frustrating."* Where jobs were going well, the general approach of Project 1 can be gleaned from the following worker's comment - *"no immediate plans to change anything."* The individuals concerned verified that they wanted to remain in their jobs, or as one person put it to *"stick to your own job"*. Circumstances outside individuals' sphere of influence, such as plans to relocate a hospital were expected to impact on a job but while everything seemed to be going well, the aspiration was to keep a 'good' job:

"I'm not an ambitious person. Everyone wants money, this that and the next thing. I just want a few simple things in life: I want to be comfortable, to have a job, have a life. I hope to keep my job, I just don't want it to sort of go bad."
(Pete)

Project 2

Three out of the four people interviewed from Project 2 were in jobs, two still in the original jobs and wanted to keep the jobs but work longer hours. Jenny, whose job was bagging shopping and collecting trolleys one day a week at a supermarket, also had ambitions to expand the job task itself. These ambitions were recognised by the project, although there were no explicit plans to re-negotiate job boundaries with her employer:

"The plan is to stay where she is and progress a wee bit further, for example, work more hours, though might affect her benefits, or working in another section of the shop. Initially the job was just the trolleys so she's already progressed."
(Jenny's Job Coach)

Similarly Jim simply wanted to stay in his present job but preferred to increase his work hours and to not attend the ARC. Jim had other ambitions including moving out of the group home into his own house (an ambition only vaguely shared by group home staff), to get married and have a family, and to take a trip to the Far East. In contrast, his residential keyworker felt that Jim needed to expand his 'leisure pursuits' and was prepared to consider independent living only in the longer term when Jim had proved he was 'ready'. Project 2 had no immediate plans to change Jim's work situation, as it seemed successful. Bill on the other hand, had lost his job and had moved into a position at the sheltered factory, thus allowing him to remain within the SEP. As a consequence he was also earning higher wages and worked longer hours than he had in the supported placement. An expressed ambition in the short term was for him to remain in his current sheltered placement, and thus to become *"more in the way of working"*, a position supported by both the project and his parents. However, it was also doubtful if this would facilitate a move into similar work in open employment given the competitiveness of the wages paid by the sheltered employer, an issue commented upon in chapter 8.

The fourth person interviewed from Project 2, had been out of a job for several months. As Sam had been on SPS, the project's efforts were concentrated on finding another job as soon as possible. However, while the project's efforts seemed to be concentrated on finding a job which they thought would match Sam's abilities and had so far suggested a supermarket position, Sam herself continued to express an interest in working with children. Her mother recognised that Sam needed to be engaged in *"something more interesting than domestic work."* if it were to keep her interest.

Project 3

Two out of the four people interviewed at the second stage from Project 3 were still in the original jobs, and two had left. There were issues around job performance for both those who remained employed, and they were dissatisfied both with low pay or not getting paid, and with the lack of opportunity for mixing with others. Regardless of job dissatisfaction however, the project's future plans were to maintain both in the jobs for the foreseeable future:

"He'll stay there until doomsday. If someone's happy, we won't move them around"
(Derrick's job coach)

There was therefore no evidence of any further exploration of individuals' personal work objectives. Further, the following quotation shows that the assumed therapeutic benefits of any integrated work rather than the 'quality' of the working conditions of a particular job, were what was uppermost in the minds of those who were closest to Derrick:

"It's important that he continues in some kind of placement doing some physically active job if this one failed. I think once you've experienced something other than the day centre it wouldn't be worthwhile for him to go back to that with nothing else in his life."
(Residential keyworker)

Similarly, although Project 3 described Bob's future in his current job as 'shaky', there was no immediate action planned until a particular problem arose. A useful opportunity to examine Bob's personal objectives thus seemed to be missed. The only forward planning that could be gleaned from the project was that he would return to the in-centre programme should he lose the job for whatever reason. Other people in Bob's life including his keyworker were content with the status quo:

"There's no reason why he can't function well in the situation he's in now. Bob is very passive regarding change. It would have to be Project 3 that changed things for him in the job line"

For the two who had lost jobs, there had been a return to the core programme and training. Helen for example, had been redirected into training. There were no long-term plans of any description for her beyond attaining vocational qualifications, although she had various ideas regarding potential employment contacts based around family and other peoples' experiences but these were not treated seriously. While Helen was engaged in vocational training, job finding had ceased. In one respect Helen had accepted that the project was not helping her to find a job at this point and therefore had become proactive - *"I'd rather look for my own job because I know what I'm wanting to do really"*. On the other hand, a lack of mentoring with vocational direction had caused despondency: *"Well hopefully, keep your finger crossed, Oh, to hell with it, I don't care if I don't get a job. I'll no bother"*. Even her residential keyworker expressed reservations about the project's current strategy:

"There's no point in gaining qualifications for the sake of it. Paper is fine but they're not going to do anything to improve her life as such."

It was extremely unclear that a job was what Marie actually wanted - *"I don't know what I want, I'll just take it as it comes"*. Her residential support staff were unclear where Marie would 'fit in' and were not convinced of the relevance of social outings, crafts and other group activities to the goal of securing a job. Despite having experienced a range of work experience placements, purportedly to broaden her experience of different work environments and job roles and therefore to aid decision-making, the lack of personal work objectives was striking. The only forward plan proposed by the project was that she should continue with work experience placements indefinitely. Hostel staff however, were worried that Marie *"would never face up to the mundane aspects of a job"* as a result of such an approach. It was proposed a further year be spent in work placements at the end of which, if a permanent job was not secured, retail training for another year would be offered. From Marie however, there was a sense that attaining vocational qualifications would do little to enhance her employment prospects - *"As if I haven't done enough of them."*

SUMMARY

Normalisation identifies the single major goal of human services as being to create or support socially valued roles for people in their society. Not all supported employees in this research however, perceived the work they performed as valuable or meaningful to them for a variety of reasons, which have been explored in this and the previous chapter. Most supported employees in the sample experienced positive outcomes but the experience was mixed. Variable outcomes were linked to individual job characteristics (such as whether jobs were part-time or paid), and also to the nature of the work, and workplace culture (especially the social characteristics of the workplace and work schedules). One could therefore conclude, that some of the perceived benefits of employment appear to be based more upon idealistic notions of work and its role in promoting fuller social integration and social acceptance less than the reality of some job situations.

The individuals in this study required to perceive the work they performed as enjoyable and meaningful, thus dispelling the myth that people with learning disabilities in general will necessarily be fulfilled with the kinds of jobs other people find boring and monotonous. The consequence of performing tasks that are meaningless to the individual are evident from the previous chapter's exploration of reasons for job loss. The most rounded experiences in supported employment, in terms of its impact on their quality of life, belonged to individuals occupying posts that could best be described as 'regular' jobs. Generally speaking this referred to positions that were full-time (though not necessarily in the traditional sense), were paid, and had a clear job purpose that could also be easily matched to the individual's work objectives and motivation.

Employment specialists frequently cite social integration as the most important outcome of supported employment with wages secondary: low wages or unpaid jobs being justifiable on the grounds of the social integration opportunity afforded by integrated employment. However, decisions regarding the balance between considerations of wages and social integration, as observed by Storey & Knutson, (1989, p266), continue to be *"hampered by the lack of data about the amount or quality of social interactions."* The data on social integration in this research was not overwhelmingly positive, and it is difficult to be totally convinced of this argument, particularly given the importance supported employees attached to receiving a wage for work performed. Wages were important for a number of reasons: getting paid for work conveyed to the individual a sense of worth and appreciation; it added to the status of 'worker' and consequently, impacted on some peoples' self-esteem; most people expect to be paid for their work; and finally, it provided some new spending power, however modest. In short, earning a wage was significant to people with learning disabilities not necessarily because it had the power to lift them out of poverty, but because a pay-cheque confers value and is what most people expect from work.

Social integration was a significant outcome identified by all three types of participant, especially supported employees themselves, but what it meant in practice was disappointing. In common with other research (Bass & Drewett, 1996; Test et al, 1993; Rusch et al, 1991), it was found that while supported employees had friends at work, only a few socialised (or planned to socialise) with their co-workers outside work. And only those served by Projects 1 and 2 were found to develop relationships that could be described as 'work friends' or 'social friends'. In chapter 6 it was suggested that supported employment might not move beyond physical integration unless employment specialists focus centrally on the integration potential of jobs and use intentional strategies that promote inclusion. The characteristics of jobs and the workplace culture, more than the support service influenced social integration, in that some workplaces and jobs were more conducive to supported employees interacting in ways that might lead to friendship. Jobs that were isolated, especially if no other employee performed similar duties, had very poor integration outcomes. Also job tasks that were vaguely conceived paid little attention to the workplace culture. Interestingly, given the argument that social integration is often considered of primary importance and wages secondary, the project placing least emphasis on wages (Project 3), also had the worst social integration outcomes.

Expectations that employment would affect the quality of life for people with learning disabilities were high and yet work was unable to fully deliver in every case, all that was expected of it. The outcome findings show that supported employment can only affect individuals' lives in a limited way: having a job is just one aspect of a person's life and where and with whom they live can have an equal, if not more significant impact on the parameters of choice and autonomy. Personal aspiration and motivation also plays a part, for instance, some people clearly expected having a job to radically change their lives from a number of perspectives including financially, socially, structurally and mental well being. Some of these individuals had their expectations met while some did not. Others principally sought only the instrumental benefits of working, and some of their expectations were met while others were not.

The benefits of supported employment can have an impact during work hours but this is less discernable at other times. It does offer the outcomes expected of it but it is not always a fulfilling experience for every supported employee as employment situations differ, but also because where someone with a learning disability lives dictates the amount of choice and independence they have. As a consequence of continuing to live in specialist residential settings, the skills, status, etc that some individuals gain through supported employment remains situation-specific or 'compartmentalised', as the parameters of their lives in general remain unaltered. Although there will be people at work who consider the individual as competent, those who are paid to support them including residential staff may continue to hold negative expectations and assumptions regarding capability. What was most significant for those living in residential settings was the contrast with other parts of their lives, predominantly spent in specialist services. Even when the outcomes such as hours, wages, social

integration etc were inferior, employment still had a positive value in their lives but it was *“more to do with the image”* as one residential keyworker put it. In a sense therefore, supported employment and the opportunity it offers to expand social participation and challenge some of the negative assumptions held about them, is of even more importance for those whose experience is dominated by disability services.

In chapter 3 it was suggested that one of the challenging practical implications of recent thinking on supported employment was the changing role of employment specialist to one of facilitator promoting choice, self-determination and career planning rather than expert. In looking at individuals' future aspirations and contrasting these with vocational plans as well as relatives and carers viewpoint, there was limited evidence to suggest that, with the exception of Project 1, the supported employment projects were adopting such a role. Project 2 relied most on professionals' assumptions about the current job market in finding subsequent jobs rather than exploring individuals' aspirations further and was only too ready to offer placements in a sheltered work setting because it was available. Meanwhile, Project 3 planned to maintain individuals in jobs even where there was dissatisfaction and to return individuals to the in-centre programme for further training and vocational rehabilitation should the jobs end.

CHAPTER 10

EMERGENT THEMES: IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY, POLICY AND PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The literature reviewed in chapters 1-4 has outlined the main issues that shaped and were explored by this research. In short, an attempt was made to find out whether supported employment delivered the outcomes expected, whether it changed the quality of individuals' lives and in what ways. Using the concept of 'quality of life' to anchor the research in the specific concerns of people with learning disabilities, it set out to explore the subjective experience of supported employment and its impact on their lives. It was essentially an exploratory study using qualitative methods, an approach which was uncommon in the field of supported employment research at the start of the 1990s. A systematic attempt was made to focus centrally on the variety of perspectives and to write about the experience specifically from the individual's viewpoint. It now remains to draw together some of the main themes from the study, highlighting key implications for theory, policy and practice and the broad lessons for future research in this field.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The central challenge for the study was one of engaging people with learning disabilities in speaking about their experiences and feelings about supported employment, given that (prior to the research) I was a stranger from an academic world, and there were practical and personal limitations on the scope of the research. Four main methods were used in the study: intensive interviewing; observation; documentary analysis; and a standard instrument measuring 'social integration'. One strength of the study was the focus on subjective experiences, even though its theoretical basis was determined largely from knowledge gleaned from professionals and researchers. As a non-disabled person, I wish to acknowledge that this interpretation and account will have limitations. While intensive interviews were successful in engaging the majority of people, the study might have benefited from further time spent on becoming more familiar

with the interviewees. All the same, efforts were made to ensure that the actual interviews were as informal and relaxed as possible, and that some time had been spent beforehand building rapport.

As Jahoda and Cattermole (1995) have argued, it can be particularly hard to justify research in services or interventions that seek to offer ordinary lives, particularly when people are living with families or independently. This tension was present in this study, particularly as the main thrust of supported employment is to find job opportunities in ordinary workplaces. The first contact individuals had with the research was through project staff with whom they were most familiar, at which point individuals were asked if they would like to participate. They were also given an information sheet briefly describing the study and highlighting any practical implications (see appendix 1). Those who were willing to participate agreed to be contacted by telephone to arrange a suitable meeting date and venue. On first meeting each individual, I always stressed that he/she had a right to refuse to answer any questions that caused distress, and that he/she could end the interview at any time. If any individual did not want to participate at any stage, his/her rights were always respected. Some individuals who had been interviewed at the first stage declined, or rather, their families declined on their behalf, to be interviewed a second time. All interviews were tape-recorded with individuals' permission, and were fully transcribed to ensure as authentic an account as possible.

With the best of intentions, using research schedules meant that I was asking questions I was interested in as a researcher and that had been shaped by issues raised in the supported employment and quality of life literature, even though provision was made for interviewees to raise any issues they felt were important. Although the findings are informative they must be interpreted with a number of limitations in mind: specifically, the sample of supported employees was small; and it was not possible to include the perspectives of either employers or co-workers. The next few paragraphs expand on the practical and personal constraints of the methods used in the study and their impact on its scope.

Practical & Personal Constraints

Well-experienced researchers in the field of learning disability suggest the ideal research situation is a well-resourced project, allowing frequent, regular and close contact between researchers and individuals over a long period of time, employing a range of techniques for holding conversations and making observations (Goode, 1994; Edgerton & Gaston, 1991; Wilkinson, 1989; Atkinson, 1988). However, few research projects, including this one, have the same resources available to them as Edgerton (1993; 1967). The literature examining effective ways of interviewing people with learning disabilities, points to the desirability of conducting an ethnographic study. The resources available, specifically in terms of time

however, did not permit such a strategy. Instead, a strategy involving triangulation made efficient use of limited fieldwork time, without sacrificing depth.

In gathering information about people's lives and their thoughts and ideas, the research design necessitated building rapport and trust and then departing with 'capta' or data. Reflecting on this process in retrospect, I can appreciate that for some people with learning disabilities and few social connections, the act of meeting in social settings prior to an interview to create a climate of openness and understanding and ultimately attain a better interview could have been misleading. In another context, such an approach could be construed as the actions of a friend. Punch (1994) commented on this dilemma in qualitative research generally, but I found it a particular ethical dilemma when interviewing people with learning disabilities as the limits of the research relationship were not always easy to explain. Sometimes the line between the roles of researcher as opposed to confidante was a blurred one.

Related to this was the dilemma of studying others whose life experiences are significantly different from one's own. This study was conducted during a time of intense questioning of research traditions and methods. Qualitative research was undergoing a critical yet exciting stage in its development (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). For disability research, this has meant new story-telling traditions or paradigms that explicitly criticise positivist theories of knowledge (Rioux & Bach, 1994). These are sometimes referred to as a 'critical social science' paradigm (Rioux & Bach, 1994), or 'emancipatory research' approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Ward & Flynn, 1994; Barnes, 1994). This shift in emphasis means that the discourse of disability becomes one that focuses centrally on citizenship, equal opportunities, and social inclusion (Felske, 1994), rather than 'clienthood' or labelling people with disabilities as the 'problem'. The place of the non-disabled researcher in setting the research agenda and carrying out research is being fundamentally challenged by these new insights.

The critical shift has been in perceptions concerning the relationship between researchers and researched (Oliver, 1996; Ward & Flynn, 1994). Felske (1994) suggested that the new rules of 'research production' include involving people with disabilities as respondents who are asked about their perceptions of support and the interventions of service providers, and which is research by, for and with people with disabilities, and also expands strategies for dissemination. Oliver (1996) emphasised research as an agent for social change through connecting localised events and experiences with the global picture, in much the same way as feminism has done. Arguably, the new role for researchers is one of illuminating those practices and factors that reinforce the social, legal and cultural construction of disability. To date, research has generally failed to take full account of this perspective illustrated by the recent review of research on employment and disability (Barnes et al, 1998), which found that people with disabilities were not

generally involved in setting the research agenda. In conclusion, new paradigms posed challenges that could only be taken into account in a limited way in this study.

EMERGENT THEMES

Although this chapter does not allow space to reflect on all of the issues raised in the thesis, I have sought to identify the key themes from the study's findings, which I think have fundamental implications for theory, policy and practice and have discussed these under six main themes: diversity in the model; 'cherry picking' the participants of supported employment; the contrast between aspirations and outcomes, and across the range of respondents in the study; the quality of supported employment jobs; the absence of a career planning approach; and the limited impact of supported employment on individuals' quality of life.

(1) Diversity in the Model

The study found a disappointing development of the concept in practice. Three supported employment projects were studied, and three different versions of the model were found. Supported employment was anything but a homogenous concept. Instead, the language of this revolutionary approach was used to justify all manner of services. Some practices contradicted the model's basic approach by focusing on individuals' deficits and their lack of 'readiness' for jobs. Opposing service philosophies and beliefs often co-existed. The characteristic jargon of the supported employment model at times mystified the practice and, arguably, even masked contradictory practices. There seems to be little recognition of this in the professional literature although a few researchers have begun to identify definitional differences between projects and the consequential difficulties for cross-cultural comparisons (West et al, 1994). None has gone so far as to suggest, as the present study has, that major philosophical and operational differences exist, some of which distort the concept of supported employment and limit its outcomes.

The projects were a variation on a theme: they agreed theoretically that supported employment meant paid jobs at the 'going-rate', with individualised support, under local employers and that it incorporated the approach known as Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI). In practice however, the projects were qualitatively different and offered different services. While they agreed with the notion of 'real jobs', not all of the projects insisted on paid employment and unpaid placements were a standard feature particularly in one project. All three projects made use of TSI, but one adapted this instructional approach to social skills training in a segregated service setting. The notion of 'on-the-job support' as referred to in the professional literature, in practice could mean anything from no support whatsoever to ten or more months of continuous job-coach presence in the workplace, and the criteria for intensity of support were not

consistent. There was evidence in at least one project, that the level and intensity of support provided depended more on the assessed needs of the job than of individuals. Similarly, while the theory stressed integrated employment with local employers, jobs in a sheltered workshop also came under the guise of supported employment. Ghettos of supported employees were quickly developing in one area because the project restricted job finding to a few so-called 'sympathetic' employers.

The existence of a day-centre component in one project meant that group programmes and vocational training in segregated settings became a feature of some supported employment services, even though such developments matched against the theory of supported employment would be seen as regressive. It also meant an inevitable return to a special setting when jobs were lost. This was tantamount to an admission of the failure of integrated employment in supporting individuals with learning disabilities. It was significant I believe that two of these projects had been developed from pre-existing vocational and training services with a contrasting philosophy to supported employment, while one was specifically set up as a dedicated project: the latter being closest to theoretical definitions of supported employment. The other projects both continued, in some way or other, to incorporate elements of either a 'readiness' or 'eligibility' model, assessing individuals against service criteria and allocating people to different service options.

The significance of this discussion from the findings presented in chapters 8 and 9 is that project approaches and programmatic features affected the outcomes of supported employment for individuals. In other words, it matters how supported employment is organised and delivered. For instance, in respect of the project that did not generally promote paid jobs, the majority of jobs were either unpaid or badly paid. When individuals' lack of work experience and perceived work skills were seen as the main issues, the outcome was more often than not, unpaid work placements (sometimes for an indefinite period of time), and vocational training. Where a project made frequent use of the government-sponsored Supported Employment Programme (SEP), other service options were afforded less priority with the common outcome that these jobs were for a few hours only, regardless of whether or not this met with individuals' aspirations or satisfaction. The findings illustrate how organisations can sometimes adopt new models and language without effecting much change in practice at all, a phenomenon previously referred to in chapter 3 as 'dynamic conservatism'.

(2) 'Cherry-Picking'

The findings suggest that in practice a process of 'cherry picking' is operating in supported employment. None of the individuals in the study sample could be described as having high support needs or 'severe

learning disabilities'. An issue raised by the literature review is how a model originally designed primarily to benefit people with severe disabilities, could in practice concentrate least on such individuals. Although one has to admit here to conjecture, the findings do suggest that the dominant need to measure success on the basis of numbers of jobs (but not necessarily paid jobs), tended to neglect 'quality' considerations. This resulted in projects attracting and selecting those people who professionals and others felt would most likely succeed. Other research has also found that individuals with severe disabilities and/or behaviour that is challenging to others, have been excluded through programmatic and attitudinal barriers, even though such individuals have been found to benefit significantly from employment opportunities where they have had the chance to participate.

With such a small research sample, and one not designed to be representative, it would be unsafe to generalise too much from the findings. However, it was also noticed that a much smaller proportion of females were present in the sample, and that males living at home seemed to benefit most from these services. Similarly the age profile of the sample revealed a predominantly young population of 20-34 year-olds being served. With reference to other research with much larger samples, it appears that such findings are not uncommon in supported employment, which suggests that outmoded beliefs in respect of gender and age, were operating in, and at the margins of the projects, and that this served to discriminate against women and older people with learning disabilities as well as people with higher support needs.

(3) Contrast Between Participants' Aspirations & Outcomes

The outcomes of supported employment by and large did not match with user aspirations. Further, significant differences in participants' priorities emerged. The study found all types of participant had extremely high expectations or aspirations, some of which were based on somewhat idealistic notions of work that were not borne out in reality. The most common aspirations for friendships and a better social life were not met in most cases. There was a fundamental difference of opinion between users, carers and professionals in the importance placed on securing paid jobs: while users' aspirations were often for paid jobs, carers and professionals prioritised social inclusion and the intrinsic benefits of work.

Although it is commonly expected that supported employment will deliver a range of positive outcomes that will improve the 'quality of life' of people with disabilities, this was not the main conclusion of this study. In many cases supported employment promised a great deal but delivered less. Despite there being a range of outcomes identified from supported employment it had achieved little tangible benefit for several individuals. This is a key finding, as the study found outcomes were linked to programmatic approaches. It is not however my intention to lay all disappointment with the outcomes of supported

employment at the door of individual projects. There is also evidence of a lack of quality job opportunities and structural barriers to employment. The study found that many individuals could not work for longer hours or for more pay, even though they wanted to, without losing welfare benefits. Such a loss was untenable, particularly for those in supported accommodation or hostels as they were required to earn in the region of £200 per week to maintain this support. This was also an issue with some families. The most unsatisfactory aspect of the outcomes of supported employment was in respect of the poor social integration outcomes experienced by most in the sample, which I will examine in a bit more depth.

Social Integration

Poor social integration outcome was a major source of user job-dissatisfaction. In this respect supported employment came nowhere near to users' expectations. In practice, the balance of professionals' input concentrated on skills development and job performance, not on promoting social integration, despite the fact this has been identified as an important aspiration. A lack of strategic focus on social integration resulted in poor outcomes in this area. Social integration was linked to key job characteristics: in particular, the hours worked, pay, etc.; the nature of the job itself; and to aspects of workplace culture. For example, jobs that involved teamwork or performing routines similar to others resulted in the most satisfactory social integration outcomes. This supports a previous assertion that so-called 'regular jobs' (that is full-time, paid jobs having a clear job purpose and with a clear link between an individual's work objectives, motivation and the activities or work entailed), achieve more positive outcomes overall. Jobs that lacked structure and those that marked a supported employee out as different by the nature of the job performed, were least satisfactory and were also the jobs most regularly lost. Although employment specialists' role in prohibiting development of social connections at work was not an explicit issue arising from this research, 'natural supports' should be explored as an important issue in the success of supported employment.

Few friendships were formed at work over the period of the research. Only one or two supported employees from the sample met socially (or planned to socialise) with their co-workers outside work. That is not to say, had the research taken place over a longer period, that quite different outcomes might have been found in some cases. Work-based relationships rarely moved from the status of 'work-mates', or at best, having 'work-friends'. In chapter 6, it was suggested that supported employment will not move beyond achieving mere physical integration unless more systematic strategies for assessing the integration potential of jobs and intentional strategies to promote inclusion are adopted, one of which might be linking better with 'natural supports'. Often individuals were visible in their workplaces but not necessarily participating in the work culture or accepted by others. Job structure or rather the lack of it, also affected

the outcomes in that poorly defined job roles paid lip service to social integration as a desired outcome. Given that social integration is argued to be of primary importance over wages, it is noteworthy that the project with the worst record of finding paid jobs also had the lowest user satisfaction with social integration outcomes.

Lack of Reciprocity

An issue touched upon in passing throughout this thesis concerns the nature of reciprocity in relationships. At the start of the research the relationships of people with learning disabilities were, in the main, with either paid supporters or close family members to whom they turned for emotional and other support. The extent to which these were reciprocal relationships was unclear, because this topic was not pursued. The work of Margaret Flynn has shown this to be an ingredient frequently missing from the relationships of people with learning disabilities. It was therefore discouraging to find that being in supported employment appeared to do little to change the pattern or nature of most people's relationships. Very few supported employees talked about having 'real' friends at work, characterised by reciprocal actions. The study found relationships with co-workers to be founded in the main on perceptions of the person as someone to be concerned about, to feel sympathy for, or as someone who needed protection from a harsh and cruel world, rather than an equal human being. That said, some individuals' aspirations in respect of making friends at work were probably unrealistic given that in reality not all workplace cultures encourage and promote the development of friendships, and society's apparent prejudice and fear of learning disability, still inhibits the development of equal relationships.

(4) Quality Issues

The quality of supported employment jobs left a lot to be desired. The majority were part-time (many were under 16 hours), low status 'entry-level' positions, and low paid. In exploring individuals' job satisfaction in relation to the characteristics of jobs, the study found that individuals make judgments about the meaningfulness of their work and that this is frequently in conflict with the way professionals judge 'meaningful work'. Where professionals concentrated solely on normative job tasks and understood little of individuals' perspectives, a key determinant of job satisfaction was neglected. Supported employees valued paid jobs and were often disappointed with unpaid or low paid jobs, not because having a wage would lift them out of poverty (this is rarely the case), but because of the symbolic value of receiving a pay-cheque. It is recognised that a pay cheque or wage slip communicates a powerful message about an individual's self worth and value: if an employer is prepared to pay for time or services, the employee feels he/she is performing tasks that are worthwhile because he/she is held in esteem by other people. A side

issue concerning payment was that several had wages paid direct into bank accounts, which was either indicative of the pervasiveness of technology in recent times, or perhaps more worryingly, an arrangement that afforded others greater control over the individual's financial resources. However, as I did not seek specific information around this issue, it must remain a speculative point.

Broadly speaking, the individuals in the sample reported reasonable levels of job-satisfaction. Those who were dissatisfied identified problems with dull, repetitive or boring tasks, offering little, if any, opportunity for recognition or to make a contribution to society. They were especially frustrated with job tasks that were poorly structured or in jobs that made them feel different from other employees. Supported employment specialists were more likely to mention performance issues as the main factor in job loss, while users identified lack of variety, meaningless jobs and poor job matches as the most significant problems. 'Meaningful jobs' is a concept that has to be determined subjectively, not in the objective characteristics of jobs identified by others. A clear link emerged between users' job dissatisfactions and reasons for job losses, confirming that job satisfaction information is of critical importance in maintaining supported employment placements.

Lack of Individual Focus

A critical issue in the discussion of the 'quality' of supported employment is the extent of its individual or person-centred focus. The findings of this study showed this to be variable. This related to ways in which vocational profiles were compiled, and job-searches and job-matching were undertaken. The literature reviewed at the start of the work suggested that a lack of person-centredness in the practice of supported employment is a central concern (see chapter 3). It is commonly assumed that supported employment equates with a person-centred focus but this study found a gulf between theory and practice. Using vocational profiles to explore individuals' vocational aspirations was not always the main focus: one project made an assessment of individuals' goals through observations during group work and from information received at referral. The latter could be spurious as individual preferences were more a product of limited experiences dictated by others rather than informed choices. Another project did not routinely undertake vocational profiles with all its clients with learning disabilities, because it did not believe in the relevance of such activity when there was little or no work history, and when what were felt to be 'unrealistic' expectations might be highlighted. Consequently there were gaps in information about personal goals and aspirations, coupled with a tendency to fit people into existing jobs.

In reality, job choice typically meant take the job or leave it, not a choice between different options. Individuals made compromises in their expectations and aspirations. The challenge of determining the

'realistic' job preferences of people with learning disabilities was highlighted by two projects. They were dismissive of the notion that individuals with learning disabilities had valid job aspirations and tended to treat their opinions and preferences less seriously than those of professionals.

(5) Absence of Career Planning

One of the most limiting features of supported employment was that individuals were generally placed in a low quality job until something happened and they lost it. The absence of a career-based approach was striking. Few individuals had long-term vocational plans, drawn up in partnership with the supported employment projects. With the exception of Project 1, a career-based approach was not built into supported employment. Similar to other research, the study found that job placement in supported employment was often perceived as final and support as temporary, with less attention paid to long-term career plans. A few individuals actively challenged this practice by electing to leave jobs themselves in search of 'better prospects'. This confirms the earlier assertions of Pumpian (1997), who suggested that helping people to find another job was often an afterthought in the supported employment process, with retraining being a reaction to job failure, rather than perceived as a positive event.

Project 1 accepted as natural that jobs might be lost or individuals would want to change jobs given the limited work experience of most people with learning disabilities. However, it remained challenging for staff especially when they had worked hard to maintain an individual in a job that was subsequently lost. During the research, individuals from the other two projects expressed desires to change their job in some way, for example, to work more hours or find a paid job, but I found little evidence that staff were being pro-active in gathering such information, let alone acting on the basis of it. The exception was in respect of jobs that had been secured through SEP, for which mandatory reviews have to be carried out on a regular basis. Such reviews looked at job-satisfaction and considered potential long-term goals. In Project 3, there was no evidence of exploration of individuals' personal work objectives, even in crisis situations. Future plans sometimes consisted of no more than a planned return to sheltered employment or an in-centre programme for further training or rehabilitation.

(6) Limited Impact of Supported Employment on 'Quality of Life'

Perhaps one of the most discordant findings from the research was that supported employment has only a limited impact on the quality of life of the majority. Given what is known about the ecological nature of quality of life, this should not be surprising in one sense. After all having a job is one dimension of life, and other factors especially where, and with whom one lives and the extent and density of one's social

network will have an equal, if not more, significant impact. It is nevertheless assumed that when one presses the supported employment button so to speak, everything else will naturally fall into place. Not every individual, however, experienced positive benefits in their quality of life as a result. Furthermore, the direct experience of supported employment itself was not always an empowering one. Not all job choices were positive: the choice was often to take a job or leave it, whether or not it fitted well with individual goals and aspirations. Not all projects worked in ways that served to enhance individuals' self-determination, but rather created dependency on professionals' expertise.

Great things are expected of supported employment, and none more so than when the person lives in supported or specialist accommodation. However, in this study I found that the stark contrast between the disability service world and ordinary workplaces meant benefits derived during working hours could be wiped out on re-entering the disability services world. Even when an individual acquires skills and is perceived as competent at work it is not guaranteed that this perception will carry over into other parts of life. For instance, residential support staff perceived some individuals as doing well in supported employment but did not consider them 'ready' to live independently in the community. In effect individuals inhabited a 'twilight zone' straddling the non-disabled community of work and the world of disability services with different norms and values, attitudes and expectations. Consequently, rather than being life changing, as many had hoped it would be, the experience of supported employment was 'compartmentalised' and limited.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The interpretation and implementation of supported employment by the three projects in the study differed from the theoretical model, at times quite substantially. The paradigm shift from 'readiness' to 'support', and the presumption of employability implicit in the model especially in the case of people with high support needs, was not easily achieved in practice, which suggests that the model is complex. The study's findings therefore pose critical questions for the theoretical coherence and hence the validity of the supported employment model. In short, the research throws up four main questions:

1. Does the variation in practice suggest that the original ideas underpinning the supported employment model were not fully understood by practitioners?
2. Were projects being opportunistic by accessing new sources of funding but not necessarily developing practice from a new ideological framework?

3. Can we conclude from the poor outcomes found that social integration as a central goal of supported employment is overrated?
4. Is the all-embracing nature of the model the problem?

In the following paragraphs I deal with each of these questions in turn, concluding with some thoughts on the theoretical implications and ways forward for the model.

Model Not Fully Understood?

One explanation for the variation in implementation is that the original ideas underpinning the model were not fully understood by practitioners. However, as there is no consensus definition of supported employment beyond theoretical agreement about three essential elements: (a) that it offers paid employment or a 'real job'; (b) that jobs are offered in integrated settings or with community employers; and (c) that there is ongoing 'support', it is perhaps unsurprising to find such diversity in practice. As chapter 5 showed there is general agreement about what supported employment should be, but projects chose to interpret and give differential emphasis to certain elements, such as the need to find paid jobs. Supported employment practice in most of the UK is separate from theoretical endeavour when compared with practice developments in the US that has demonstration projects evaluated by academics and University Affiliated Programmes (UAPs) ensuring closer links between practice, research and training.

While one project demonstrated limited understanding of key aspects of the theoretical model, so much so that elements of its practice were regressive when studied in the light of theory, it is not unusual to expect a theoretical model to be developed and modified through practical application. It is possible though that some practitioners had a firmer grounding in the theory and understand the supported employment model better than others, and that some did not in reality make the required transition or shift in thinking from 'caring for' to 'supporting' individuals on their terms that is implicit in the model. Self-evidently some of the practice contained elements of eligibility and readiness models that sit uneasily with supported employment approaches.

Opportunistic Practice Development?

Some of what passed for supported employment should be viewed as largely opportunistic in its development, as a response to new funding criteria and national and local policy development expectations. There are parallels that can be drawn with the interpretation and implementation of

normalisation. Apparent changes in terminology and language sometimes mask an underlying practice conservatism: to all outward appearances it can appear that radical changes have taken place and new forms of support have been developed when in reality old modes of thinking and behaviour continue to mould the practice. In consequence, fundamental beliefs about individual rights, quality of life perspectives and the centrality of self-determination in the process of supported employment remain unfulfilled by the practice.

The practical difficulties of implementing the model imply that the ideals of supported employment thus remain at the level of aspiration. Paid jobs in some contexts seem unattainable; not all placements are under community employers; and individualised support is sometimes tailored to the requirements of a job rather than the needs of individuals especially since resources to provide ‘ongoing support’ are usually finite. In any field it seems crucial to strive for ideals or goals and for theoretical models to act as a standard bearer for human services, albeit accepting that the relationship between theory and practice is necessarily an interactive one. Nonetheless, in some cases opportunity seems to come first followed by ideals, principles and values and consequently the practice can be built on shaky ground.

Is Social Integration Overrated?

Although all participants in the study identified social integration as an important aspirational outcome, the overriding emphasis it is given in supported employment was clearly professional-driven. In contrast, the goal of securing ‘real’ that is, paid regular jobs with community employers was essentially a user-driven aspiration. Individuals with learning disabilities were interested in jobs that were meaningful to them and derived most job satisfaction from knowing they were valued for their contribution and for performing tasks which held meaning for them. The model, however, tends to assume that physical presence in an ordinary workplace inevitably leads to social participation and ultimately to acceptance of people with learning disabilities by the wider community. The study’s finding showed that emphasising social integration in this way deflected professionals’ attention from important quality aspects of jobs as defined by the users in my sample. That expectations were not met, particularly in respect of social integration, suggests this goal may be too idealistic in many workplaces and work cultures.

Supported employment originated in the US as a way of enabling people excluded from traditional employment opportunities to participate in the workforce and thus to contribute to society, specifically to become a tax payer rather than be a dependant on welfare. This begs the question of whether we are in danger of allowing the notion of social integration to override other important considerations identified by users such as the importance of securing regular paid jobs, which were emphasised in earlier formulations

of the theory. It was suggested in this chapter that supported employment may not move beyond achieving mere physical integration unless more systematic strategies for assessing integration potential of jobs and intentional strategies to promote social inclusion are adopted, one of which includes creating as well as capitalising on natural supports within the workplace. It could be claimed with a fair degree of certainty, that most other people who are not labelled as learning disabled do not seek jobs primarily to be socially integrated into society, although a social life and work friends may be a positive by-product of participating in some workforces. Why should it be assumed different for people with learning disabilities?

Model Too All Embracing?

The concept of self-determination as developed by the self-advocacy movement, and the quality of life movement have been grafted onto supported employment theory more recently. These ideals have overlaid a philosophy that is rooted firmly in normalisation, with its dominant emphasis on promoting socially valued roles and pursuit of full social integration, and professionally driven. Is there a sense then in which the model is almost trying to do too much? My findings in relation to the limited impact on quality of life would suggest it is. The emphasis on skill development and independence, which has taken precedence over other things, is potentially hampering the development of a self-determining approach in supported employment. Advancement in the area of ‘natural supports’ as discussed in the body of the thesis potentially represents a shift in professionals’ control and greater involvement of people with disabilities and their families in the whole process.

It is possible that faced with practical constraints and the types of structural barriers discussed earlier in chapter 2 and later in chapters 8-9, these projects understood the model and were in fact doing the best they could within a difficult and different economic, legal, political and social context than that in which the model was conceived. Such factors as other peoples’ attitudes and the welfare benefit system for example were shown by the study to have a significant influence on the types of jobs offered under supported employment and consequently the opportunities afforded for social integration. The current UK welfare benefit system restricts the opportunities available to people with learning disabilities through supported employment. In the absence of national reappraisal of employment alongside welfare policy, it is therefore difficult to envisage how some of the problems encountered by the supported employees in the sample might be tackled in the future. For instance, the desire among users for more paid jobs and to work for more than a few hours appears to be nothing short of a pipe dream in the current context.

In overall conclusion, my study's findings imply that the supported employment model has a more limited impact on people's quality of life than the theory would lead one to expect. The range of outcomes expected of supported employment by professionals, users and carers seems unrealistic and thus unhelpful. Setting grand theoretical aspirations, especially in terms of the model's potential to achieve social integration is evidently counterproductive, in that poor outcomes result in disappointment and disillusionment with the supported employment model that in some respects is unjustified. It is failing to live up to aspirations because it is trying to be all things to all people. Although evidently there are positive social outcomes for some people, setting up a model that claims to achieve the goal of social integration is probably too simplistic. While it is possible to speculate and hypothesize about what might facilitate good social integration outcomes, there is still more that needs to be understood about what social integration means to individuals with disabilities and how it happens in reality.

Not only is supported employment not a panacea, it may not deliver all that it promises for those with high support needs. For such people, the capacities of the model to deliver those positive outcomes that are claimed, are at best unproven, at worst doubtful. It would be true to say, in this country at least, that the model's capacity to enhance the quality of life of people with high support needs is as yet unproven. In light of this and other research the theoretical model of supported employment is clearly in need of reformulation and revision of its essential features and values. There may therefore, be a new paradigm emerging which would merit detailed exploration that builds on new insights from the quality of life movement, ideas about person-centred planning and the more recent notion of self-determination. All these suggest that users and practitioners are seeking a new approach and this should be reflected in supported employment theory. A major step forward would be to acknowledge the limitations of jobs in integrated settings, in the same way as it is now understood from research that moving into the community from institutions is not an answer in itself. In the next section I go further to suggest a number of implications for policy and practice arising out of this discussion.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY & PRACTICE

The four key questions identified and explored above have implications for the development of policy and the practice of supported employment and these are now discussed under six headings: changing operational philosophies; the need for consensus of definition and national standards; the need to direct attention away from the individual to structural and attitudinal barriers as the main problem to be

addressed; the need for closer links with self advocacy groups; the importance of user-defined quality; and finally, the need to test the effectiveness of adopting intentional strategies to promote social inclusion.

Changing Operational Philosophies

When supported employment projects are developed from pre-existing rehabilitation, vocational and/or training services, which have different operational philosophies from the support model, contradictory practice invariably results and militates against achieving some of the quality outcomes that users demand. The implementation of the support model requires practitioners to be idealistic and principled and to have a good theoretical understanding of supported employment. The recent development of a diploma for staff in supported employment is potentially a positive development in this direction. I would however suggest there is an urgent need for planners, commissioners and practitioners to revisit the core principles and values underpinning supported employment, and to do this in partnership with people with disabilities and their families in light of new theoretical discoveries.

Future projects need to be consciously formulated from the 'pure support model', not a watered-down version grafted onto existing practice. The best quality outcomes for supported employees are attained when practitioners strive to implement the pure support model as far as possible. It would be preferable to develop supported employment initiatives as independent from other types of employment and day services otherwise there is a real danger that staff will not make the necessary conceptual leap from a traditional welfare or care approach to the support model. Many supported employment projects have been developed in the UK from forward thinking day services, but to be effective, independence from these other services is desirable.

Projects making extensive use of the government-sponsored 'Supported Employment Programme' had a profound effect on supported employment options not covered by this scheme within the same project. Jobs not included in the scheme tended to be for only a few hours per week, regardless of whether this was what the user wanted. There was also a tendency to apply less rigorous monitoring systems to the other options, measuring such things as users' job satisfaction. All this suggests the need for practitioners to be aware of the implications of offering SEP placements alongside unsubsidised supported employment options, and of the need to monitor closely whether and in what ways, supported employment is affected by concentrating on meeting formal criteria for the SEP, if it is not to become the poor relation.

Consensus of Definition and Agreed National Standards

The study pointed up a some gaps between theory and practice of supported employment, which were not helped by the lack of consensus definition. The lack of policy co-ordination and definition of supported employment nationally has hampered the development of consistent and high-quality services. The fragility of supported employment in this country compared to its American counterpart has to be addressed. Funding sources in the UK are somewhat precarious, offering more scope for opportunism in the interpretation and implementation than in the US where supported employment funding is more closely tied into a policy and legal framework.

It is my opinion that working towards an agreed national definition and quality standards that users help to define, would offer a firmer foundation for prioritising future developments, targeting projects at those with higher support needs, for whom the model was originally intended, and for assuring quality. At the moment the interpretation and implementation of the model is particularly idiosyncratic. However, in order to ensure that this does not result in reducing supported employment to a set of highly professionalised procedures involving specific instructional technologies and service approaches, standards will need to be developed from what users and their families say they want and from a partnership approach with all the major stakeholders. It will also be important that funders of supported employment come to expect more sophisticated outcome measures than mere number crunching of people in jobs (paid or unpaid).

Structural & Attitudinal Barriers

An unmistakable finding was that the current welfare benefit system in the UK poses a major barrier to the proper implementation of supported employment. The findings concur with the conclusion arrived at by others that a radical review of the whole welfare benefits system in relation to employment policy is needed if such policies are to fulfil stated objectives and increase the employment opportunities of people with disabilities. Otherwise many of these objectives will remain aspirational and rhetorical. A major issue is that in practice, the 'problem' is still assumed to reside primarily in the individual with disabilities and many interventions concentrate on tackling individual deficits. This flies in the face of the powerful structural and attitudinal barriers that exist, which are clearly outside the individual's own influence (see

chapter 2). A more direct approach to addressing some of these barriers instead of focusing on individual deficits, would reflect user-defined practice.

The findings also highlight the attitudinal barriers facing people with higher support needs who want to find jobs through supported employment. This challenges funders of supported employment as well as practitioners to find ways to include people with higher support needs, accepting that it may take longer to achieve placements, that support may need to be more intensive and for longer periods of time if not indefinitely, and that consequently fewer individuals will be placed. This would somehow need to be reflected in the standards, priorities and targets set for supported employment. More sophisticated measures of success than crude numbers of people in jobs will have to be found.

Closer Links with the User Movement

The need for closer links between the model and the concerns of self-advocates was evident from the study. It is spurious to assume that every idea will be replicated with equal success; moreover, one of the problems with becoming attached to models or approaches is the development of vested interests, which sometimes operate counter to espoused values. As McLoughlin et al (1987, p213) commented over ten years ago, *"as we have learned not to invest in the bricks and mortar of institutions, we must not bet on a particular way."* My study, in line with other research, found that supported employment specialists are guilty of making major decisions on behalf of people with learning disabilities without always having the benefit of comprehensive information or full consideration of personal goals and desires. A closer partnership between the supported employment movement and self-advocates should be fostered in the UK on both a policy and individual practice level. The potential of initiatives such as direct payments and voucher systems for supported employment, similar to those being developed in the US, merit serious attention by practitioners as a method for increasing user control.

The importance of adopting a quality of life perspective when wishing to effect changes that increase individuals' self-determination and improve choice and control over the processes of supported employment was underlined by this study. The limited influence supported employment has on an individual's overall quality of life has to be acknowledged, as well as the opportunity it clearly affords some to expand opportunities for social participation and challenge the negative stereotypes held about people with learning disabilities. New partnerships between people with disabilities and their families and

professionals, which mean more direct control of the supported employment process by users, need to be developed (Kregel, 1998; Sowers et al, 1996; Steere et al, 1995). Quality needs to be defined as conformity with user requirements and a stronger focus on outcomes that contribute to improving individuals' quality of life, empowerment and choice.

Although there are challenges in gathering information and acting upon individuals' aspirations and goals, the evidence in respect of job retention identifies this as a critical issue for supported employment. Clearly more weight needs to be given to ways of finding out from individuals what they are looking for from their jobs and considering creative ways of helping realise personal goals. The role of employment specialist needs to change to one of facilitator and enabler. This study's findings suggest that such a development is not yet widespread. The assumption that changing the language of professionals will inevitably result in the desired changes, is without foundation. There are still many lessons to learn about adopting and implementing a person-centred planning approach. Self-advocates and the civil rights movement have much to teach the developers of supported employment.

User-Defined Quality Jobs

Discovering individuals' vocational aspirations was not always achieved through the advocated method of individual vocational profiles, as practitioners failed to spend enough time gathering personal information, or failed to recognise the relevance of this approach in working with people with limited work experience. Gaps in personal knowledge and information about goals and aspirations were coupled with a tendency to fit people into existing jobs. However challenging a prospect, more weight must be given to meeting users' expectations: for example, for paid jobs. This is a concern highlighted by self-advocates in the US who have identified among the characteristics of 'good' jobs such things as adequate pay and benefits, control of money benefits and receiving cost of living increases. A second aspect of 'quality' is to find jobs that are personally meaningful and satisfying to individuals. Wertheimer (1992, p35) pointed out "*we need to have high expectations of people with learning disabilities...It is easy to assume that people are only capable of manual and menial (and thus low paid) work: and we may be communicating those assumptions to employers*". That imperative still holds true today.

The individuals in this study clearly demonstrated that the most successful jobs are those in which individuals can find enjoyment and from which they derive a sense of meaning. Having said that, some

individuals, in common with the general population, are mainly interested in the instrumental benefits of employment. There is a growing body of theory about how to use person-centred planning approaches to enhance careers and long-term planning. Greater emphasis generally requires to be placed on the need to adopt an individual focus in supported employment. Not only will this ensure supported employment becomes more user-driven, it might also save staff time that would otherwise be spent on supporting unsatisfying jobs and picking up the pieces of poor job-match decisions when jobs are lost. More needs to be made of the link between job dissatisfaction and job loss found by the study. Gathering systematic evidence of job satisfaction is a critical issue for supported employment. Practitioners need to incorporate measures of job satisfaction in systems for monitoring the quality of supported employment.

Intentional Strategies to Promote Social Inclusion

The study in line with recent literature suggests that without intentional strategies, social integration will not be an outcome of supported employment. In order to test this hypothesis, practitioners need to adopt more explicit strategies. Underlying much of the discussion has been the need to focus on better ways of fostering relationships and increasing the diversity and number of sources of support. Making friends at work and having a better social life were outcomes that users wanted from supported employment, and an aspect that failed to live up to promise. Some writers (e.g. Anderson & Andrew, 1990) have recognised that the supported employment process can work in ways that actually keep people with disabilities separate from other people, even though community inclusion is a commonly acknowledged goal. Other studies have shown that the presence of a job coach or equivalent can be stigmatising and hinder social integration. Although the study did not look at the concept of 'natural supports' specifically, its findings suggest the need to look more closely at the role of employment specialists, employers, co-workers and others in the person's informal social network, in supporting and facilitating social inclusion.

It would be unreasonable to expect projects to be able to predict exact levels of social integration in particular work settings but practitioners could pay greater attention to evaluating strengths and weaknesses of different workplaces, and projects using any one of a number of measures or indices designed for this purpose, together with the knowledge gleaned from new insights from qualitative studies of workplace culture. There were several evaluative measures of social integration identified at the start of this research and it is likely that better and more sophisticated measures have been developed since.

A programme of staff training is needed for supported employment specialists to equip them with adequate knowledge of the practical strategies for facilitating community integration through relationship network

development, but also so that they are able to understand the broader quality of life issues and the limitations of the supported employment effort. This would be necessary at every level of organisations. All supported employment staff should understand how a philosophical commitment to community integration could be operationalised in practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One way of fostering a better understanding and clarity about what is happening in practice is to ensure there is closer partnership between academics and practitioners. The network of University Affiliated Programmes or UAPs in several major Universities in the US is one way, though not the only way. The Centre set up to research and evaluate learning disability policy and practice at Cardiff University based on an applied research model and closely tied into national policy and practice development is another example. There is no equivalent at present in Scotland, although the new Disability Research Centre at Glasgow University provides a broader focus for Scottish research on disability generally.

Related to this is how projects come to know about and understand the supported employment model and the extent to which they take active steps to keep up-to-date with theoretical developments and the findings of research. Supported employment projects in the UK are at a distinct disadvantage in this respect in that most of the research is based upon experience in the US, although a new body of research examining supported employment in various European countries is emerging. However, this still falls short of the close relationship between demonstration projects and research institutions in America and elsewhere. The European Union of Supported Employment and its Scottish counterpart, the Scottish Union of Supported Employment, therefore have a key role to play in providing leadership and encouraging a learning culture through active dissemination of research findings and theoretical developments.

One of the key issues for future research effort, if supported employment is to fulfil its potential for people with learning disabilities, is to adopt a more fine-grained approach to researching its outcomes. The above discussion suggests that change needs to happen on a number of levels. Crude measures of quality of life and social integration taken as a measure of the success or otherwise of supported employment, tells only a partial story. Supported employment will never be a panacea for poor social networks, lack of educational opportunity, poor housing and inadequate support. A new research agenda grown out of a quality of life framework will need to be framed and developed in conjunction with users and families and the evidence is that such an agenda will be different from one developed by professionals.

Specific Issues for Further Research

Four specific issues for further research emerge from this study. The issues concern the accessibility of supported employment, the structural and attitudinal barriers to employment opportunities that meet individuals' aspirations, how supported employment can become more consumer-focused, and social integration. First, the accessibility issues thrown up by this research would suggest the need to focus on the supported employment experience of individuals with high support needs, with the intention of arriving at a better understanding of what is needed to make this kind of support successful. Further, the tentative findings around gender difference and age bias in the experience of supported employment, suggest that focusing on the specific experiences and needs of women with learning disabilities and those aged 40 plus could illuminate further what could only be hinted at in this and other studies. What specific barriers operate to exclude them from both the employment market and the supported employment system? Such research could help planners, commissioners and practitioners to ensure equality of opportunity in supported employment.

The second area concerns attitudinal and structural barriers to employment opportunity for people with learning disabilities. In this study, employers' and co-workers' attitudes could not be examined. Given the changes taking place globally in the employment market and the nature of work, and in light of the fact there is little research in the UK focusing on other peoples' attitudes to supported employees, it would be worth investigating how employers' and co-workers' attitudes affect individuals' experience of supported employment. Staff attitudes were shown to influence the type and quality of employment opportunity available. Supported employees were channeled into particular types of jobs with under-representation in certain industries, and there was evidence that staff perceptions of 'realistic' job choices affected outcomes. There is little research that has directly examined the attitudes, skills and approaches of supported employment staff and this should perhaps be addressed. With regard to the structural barriers that clearly exist, it may be interesting to examine further whether other people with learning disabilities who are working part-time are doing so out of choice or necessity. This research suggests that the parameters of choice are decided by factors outside individuals' control: in particular the influence of structural barriers (the limitations of the welfare benefits system in particular), and attitudinal barriers (including the low expectations of other people).

An important area for the future development of supported employment to emerge from this study and recent literature is the need for a clearer consumer focus. The study found that projects did not concentrate enough on individuals' aspirations and satisfaction with supported employment. More quality of life and consumer evaluation is needed. The quality of supported employment outcomes were found wanting. More outcome-based and consumer satisfaction research is needed testing whether adopting new person-centred planning approaches in supported employment results in expected improvements in the quality of individual outcomes. Where projects make attempts to adopt person-centred approaches based on new partnerships with users and carers, researchers need to evaluate the outcomes.

The findings regarding social integration as an outcome were controversial given the current practice emphasis. It is suggested above that practitioners need to test the assumption that adopting explicit or intentional strategies will improve social integration outcomes. Are such projects more effective in achieving positive social integration outcomes and how are they doing this? In so far as supported employment results in positive social integration outcomes for a few individuals, it would be helpful for research to attempt to focus on the features and characteristics of such positive experiences and so begin to identify with greater confidence the conditions most likely to foster social integration. Potentially this means building on recent research, particularly qualitative approaches that have examined workplace culture and natural supports.

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APPENDICES

RESEARCH ON SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Background

The number of people with learning disabilities finding real jobs through supported employment services in Scotland is growing. There is little written about this development north of the border. My research will provide a picture of the experiences of some of the people using supported employment services in Scotland today.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose is to compare your life before you get a real job with some time after you have been in a job. There is much written on supported employment about what professionals think. There is not a lot which is from the point of view of people with learning disabilities. My study wants to look at the individual stories of around 20 people with learning disabilities in Scotland.

Value of the Research

The main value is that it will inform professionals who deliver supported employment services about what it is like for the people using their services. Information like this can improve the quality of services. It may therefore, help other people like yourself in the future. It will show that it is important to ask people with learning disabilities about their experiences.

What will it mean for you and the people you live with?

Before you start your job I would like to meet and talk to you about getting a job and what you think about that, what you do with your time now, about your hobbies and your family and friends. I will also talk to your job support worker and your parents or keyworker if you live in supported accommodation or a hostel. I will ask your permission first. I am happy to meet anywhere that is suitable for you, at your home, your day centre, or other local place where we can speak in private.

Later on I may ask to spend some time at your work but I would not disturb your work or the people you work with. This would be some time after you have been working there. About six months after you have started your job I would like to meet you again and talk to you and your carer about how it is going and how happy you are with your job. By that time you will probably have a pretty good idea of what you think about working and how your life has changed.

Participation in the Research

Please consider taking part in this research. I am happy to discuss any questions you have . It is your choice whether or not to take part but I hope that you do. Anything that you say to me will not be repeated to anyone else and will only be used for my research. In my written report I will not mention your real name or identify you.

I look forward to meeting you:

Julie Ridley

Edinburgh University, Dept of Social Policy & Social Work,
Adam Ferguson Building, George Square, Edinburgh

Appendix 2

SUPPORTED EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
(PRE- MEASURE)

NAME:

HOME ADDRESS:

TYPE OF DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT:

☐ Home of parents ☐ Own House/Flat ☐ Supported accommodation
☐ Foster home ☐ Group Home ☐ Institution
☐ Other _____

LIVING WITH? _____

AGE: _____ **SEX:** M ☐ F ☐

MARITAL STATUS: Married ☐ Single ☐ Divorced/Separated ☐

LEVEL OF LEARNING DISABILITY (if assessment recorded):

- 1. Mild (IQ 52-70)
- 2. Moderate (IQ 36-51)
- 3. Severe (IQ 20-35)
- 4. Profound (IQ under 20)
- 5. Unknown

SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE/MAIN CARER'S NAME & CONTACT ADDRESS?

NAME & TEL NUMBER OF JOB SUPPORT WORKER:

NAME OF DAY CENTRE:

PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

JOB TITLE :

PROPOSED WAGE LEVEL:

The Job

- ⇒ Reasons for wanting a job.
- ⇒ Expectations/Aspirations
- ⇒ What is important? List, then rank most important
- ⇒ Probe in depth on expected outcomes/benefits of supported employment - e.g.
 - * having your own money
 - * being busy, having something to do
 - * being helpful to others
 - * meeting other people
 - * wearing a uniform
 - * independence/control over life
- ⇒ What would be your dream job? Why?

Day Services

- ⇒ Current occupation at the day centre.
- ⇒ Wages?
- ⇒ Activities
- ⇒ Friendships/Relationships
- ⇒ Opinions of and satisfaction with day services.

Supported Employment Services

- ⇒ Finding out about supported employment.
- ⇒ Understanding of supported employment and what it will involve.
- ⇒ Job choice
- ⇒ Satisfaction with supported employment, job coach, etc.

Personal Presentation

Make record of my personal impressions and observations during interview

Choice

1. When to go out and come in.
2. Friends
3. Where to go on holiday.
4. Front door key
5. Bedroom key.
6. Clothes - buying and wearing
7. When to go to bed and get up.
8. How to spend personal money.

Social Integration

- ⇒ Describe past one or two days using separate sheet (Social Contacts - casual, social etc. Notice tone of the description).
- ⇒ Distinguish between physical presence and social participation, and between participation and specific friendships.
- ⇒ Record frequency of activities and contacts with others, size and quality of the network.
- ⇒ Who is in their social network - list names. How did they meet?
- ⇒ Feelings about current social network and support.
- ⇒ Feelings of loneliness?

Social Support/Quality of Social Relationships

- ⇒ (Prompt sheet) Satisfaction with current level of social support.

Autobiographical details

Life Satisfaction

- ⇒ Identify the good things and bad things about their life.
- ⇒ What do they like most?
- ⇒ Feelings about their lives overall.

SOCIAL SUPPORT PROMPT SHEET

(Identify which people provide the following examples of social support and whether reciprocated)

1.Private Personal Feelings

- Someone you can talk to if you have a row/fight with your parents/sister or brother/girlfriend or boyfriend/wife or husband.
- Someone you can tell secrets to like there is someone you particularly like and want to talk to someone about them.
- Feeling really upset or sad or disappointed about something like losing a job, and you need someone to talk to.
- You're going to have a certain operation or need medical treatment and need to talk to someone about it.

2.Money

- Someone you feel comfortable with who will lend you £10 because the local bank or bank machine is closed or you have forgotten your purse/wallet.
- Give you milk, bread, sugar etc if you run out and the shop is closed.

3. Advice/Help

- Someone you would approach if you needed help or advice.
- Someone to give advice about moving to a new flat/house.
- Someone who would give you help with your money, or sorting out bills.
- About changing your hairstyle or trying a new style of clothes.

4.Giving Praise/encouragement

- Someone who lets you know when you've done something well.
- Someone who lets you know when you look nice - you're hair has been cut or you're wearing nice clothes.
- Someone who says thanks and how much they liked what you did for them.

5. Physical Help

- Helps you to get ready in the morning if you need that.
- Would give you a lift in their car or come with you on the bus if you needed them to.
- Look after your house, and/or plants and/or pets whilst you went on holiday.
- Get your shopping for you if you had a problem with that.
- Help you decorate your new flat or house.
- If you left home someone who would give you somewhere to stay.
- Would help you get to the hospital if you were sick.

6 Socialising

- Someone you would celebrate Christmas or New Year with.
- Someone to celebrate your birthday with by going out with you.
- Go out with you to see a film, or for a meal, or to a disco.
- Someone you could go on holiday with.
- Meet you for drink on a Friday or Saturday night.
- Someone you chat to about the weather or pass the time of day with.

Any other person(s) not mentioned above but whom you feel close to and keep in some kind of contact with?

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Appendix 3

SUPPORTED EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(POST-MEASURE)

The Job

- Ask for description of the job and workplace. (Probe)
- Feelings (for example, interesting, boring, tiring, hard work, enjoyable, satisfying, worthwhile etc.).
- Most important things about being in work: (separate sheet)
- Like most and least about the job.
- How happy with:
 - a) work supervisor
 - b) job coach (what help they gave in work & outside work)
 - c) coworkers
 - d) wages/pay
 - e) job tasks
 - f) place of work
 - g) hours
 - h) travelling to work
 - i) social activities through work
- Rank most important/satisfactory.
- Getting along with people at work. Anyone get on with especially well? (i) at work/breaks, lunch etc; (ii) evenings & weekends.
- If had problems at work who would they go to? Have any problems arisen? What happened?
- Generally left to decide what to do, or given clear instructions/set routine. Feelings about that.

If Job Changes Their Life

- What kinds of changes (money to spend, independence, self esteem, friends, interests etc) List.
- Most important changes.
- How they spend their time now.
- Social network - Who they spend their time with now.
- New hobbies
- New friends.
- Social Support Questions - Repeat
- How happy with life overall & friendships in particular.
- Feel Lonely?

The Future

Any thoughts about:

- training
- other job same firm/different firm
- something else

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Appendix 4

SUPPORTED EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(POST-MEASURE IN EVENT OF JOB LOSS)

The Job

- Ask for description of the job and workplace. (Probe)
- Feelings (for example, interesting, boring, tiring, hard work, enjoyable, satisfying, worthwhile etc.).
- Most important things about being in work: (separate sheet)
- Compare previous answers.
- Liked most and least about the job.
- How happy were they with:
 - a) work supervisor
 - b) job coach (what help they gave in work & outside work)
 - c) coworkers
 - d) wages/pay
 - e) job tasks
 - f) place of work
 - g) hours
 - h) travelling to work
 - i) social activities through work
- Rank most important/satisfactory.
- How they got along with people at work. Anyone get on with especially well? (i) at work/breaks, lunch etc; (ii) evenings & weekends.
- Generally left to decide what to do, or given clear instructions/set routine. Feelings about that.

Job Termination

- What problem(s) arose in the job? What happened?
- Has it changed in any way your view about having a job?
- Are you still interested in finding a job?
- From the experience, will things be different next time round? (eg. know how to relate to people better, importance of being on time etc)
- Feelings about current situation.
- What would you like to happen next?

If Job Changed Their Life

- What kinds of changes (money to spend, independence, self esteem, friends, interests etc) List.
- Most important changes.
- How they spend their time now.
- Social network - Who they spend their time with now.
- New hobbies.
- New friends.
- Social Support Questions - Repeat
- How happy with life overall and friendships in particular.
- Feel Lonely?

The Future

Any thoughts about:

- training
- other job
- something else

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Appendix 5

CARER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(PRE-MEASURE)

The Job

What they think having a job will mean for the person, expected outcomes.
Their hopes and aspirations for (consumer) in respect of this job, as well as anxieties/fears.

Supported Employment Service

How they found out about supported employment.
What they understanding about supported employment.
How are they making choices and decision about having a job?
How involved were they?
Impressions of and satisfaction with the supported employment service/project (staff, work-site, nature of the job, supported employment staff etc.).

Satisfaction with Day Services

Opinions of the current day services (consumer) attends if appropriate.

Individual's Skills

Travel
Domestic
Independent living
Social
Other abilities

Social Integration & Social Support

Current Activities: Hobbies and membership of clubs/societies etc.
Map key people in this person's life who form their intimate friends, good friends, networks of participation and the people paid to be in their lives (including hairdresser, accountants, social worker etc.)

Self Perception/Self Esteem

How do they perceive themselves?
Do they feel good about themselves and why?
How do they would view themselves - high or low self esteem?

Choices

Weekly expenditure.

Personal dress/appearance.

Organisation of domestic arrangements - eat, when to come in and go out etc.

Leisure

Friendships

Front door key and bedroom key?

Holidays

Biographical Information

Brief history of person's life. How carer describes this individual. Person's strengths, abilities and likes, etc.

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Appendix 6

CARER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (POST-MEASURE)

The Job

- Opinions - (i) surprises & (ii) reservations
- Satisfaction with job match.

Supported Employment Service

- What SE meant in practice
- Opinions of service, including job coach
- How happy with SE?
- Needed different help?
- Current Support.
- How happy with their level of involvement?

Outcomes

- What job has meant to person (see separate sheet)
- New activities or hobbies. Clubs/societies etc.
- New friends/relationships.

The Future

- Carers' hopes and aspirations for future.

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Appendix 7

CARER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (POST-MEASURE IN EVENT OF JOB LOSS)

The Job

- Opinions - (i) surprises & (ii) reservations
- Satisfaction with job match.

Outcomes

- What job meant to person (see separate sheet)
- New activities or hobbies. Clubs/societies etc.
- New friends/relationships.

Experience of Job Loss

- What problem(s) arose in the job? What happened?
- Changed views in any way?
- Was it a learning experience for X?
- Feelings about current situation.

Supported Employment Service

- What did SE meant in practice
- Opinions of service, including job coach
- How happy with SE?
- Needed different help?
- Current Support, if any.
- How happy with their level of involvement?

The Future

- Carers' hopes and aspirations for future.

(c) Julie Ridley (January 1996)

University of Edinburgh
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is being carried out as part of post graduate research under the supervision of the Department of Social Work at the University of Edinburgh. It will be used for research purposes only. This questionnaire requests some factual information about the Supported Employment Service/Project you manage. I would be grateful if you would complete **ALL** Sections and return to me before _____ The information contained in your answers will enable the interview with you to be more focused on your opinions of supported employment and the organisation of the service. Thank you in advance for your co-operation

Julie Ridley, PhD student January 1995

Name of Service/Project : _____

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Which area(s) and population(s) are served by your Supported Employment Service/Project?

2. How long has this Service/Project been operating to provide supported employment?

3. From which sources are people with learning disabilities referred? Please tick all appropriate referral sources

- ☐ Day centres
- ☐ Self Referral
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Community Learning Difficulties Teams
- ☐ Sheltered Workshops
- ☐ Employment Rehabilitation Centres
- ☐ DRO's
- ☐ Special schools
- ☐ Other, please specify

4. What are the Service's/Project's funding sources? (Please specify)

SECTION 2 - STAFF & SERVICE USERS

Profile of the Staff

5. How many staff are in the supported employment service/project, including yourself? **total:** ____ **(full time:** ____ **part time:** ____)
6. What are their job titles, including your own? Please give full details.

Job Title	Number of Staff
-----------	-----------------

7. What is the sex and age profile of staff ?

Age Range in Years	Male	Female
18 - 24		
25 - 34		
35 - 44		
45 - 54		
55+		
Total		

8. What is the previous occupational background of the staff? Please indicate using categories below:

Previous Background	Number
Social Welfare	
Health	
Marketing & Sales	
Skilled (e.g. engineering)	
Training & Education	
Clerical/Admin.	
Other (Please give details below)	
No previous background	
Total	

9. How many of your staff hold a professional qualification? _____
10. Which of your staff, and how many are trained in TSI (or similar)?
11. What currently is the average number of service users per job support worker?
12. Is there a maximum number of service users per job support worker? _____

Service/Project Users

13. Do your service users have a range of disabilities? If you work with people with a range of disabilities please tick all appropriate categories:

Disability Group	
Learning Disability	
Physical Disability	
Mental Illness	
Other (please specify)	

14. How many **people with learning disabilities** in the past year have you placed in jobs through your service? _____
15. Do you have a record of, or an assessment of the degree of learning disability for each individual?
16. In terms of people with **learning disabilities** only, how many service users have mild to moderate learning disability, severe or profound learning disability or have been labelled as having challenging behaviours?

Level of Learning Disability	Number
Mild/Moderate	
Severe/Profound	
Challenging Behaviour	
Not Known	

17. In the past year, as regards service users with **learning disabilities only**, what were their ages and sex? Please provide details in the following age ranges.

Age Range	Male	Female
Under 18		
18 - 24 years		
25 - 34 years		
35 - 49 years		
50 - 64 years		
Over 65		
Total		

18. For how many people with **learning disabilities** are you actively seeking jobs at the present time? (i.e. numbers waiting to be placed in jobs) _____

SECTION 3 - THE JOB PLACEMENTS

19. How many supported jobs in respect of people with learning disabilities are:

- ___ **Full time**
- ___ **Between 15 - 20 hrs**
- ___ **Less than 15 hrs per week**

20. Please give as much detail as possible of the kinds of jobs found, including types of work sites (such as retail, catering, office, warehouse). Please use supplementary sheets if necessary.

Job Type	Job Site	Number of service users	Length of time in job
----------	----------	-------------------------	-----------------------

21. How many of your service users with learning disabilities have lost jobs within the past year?: _____

22. What were the main reasons for these job losses in each case?

<u>Factors Identified as Cause of Involuntary Job Separation</u>	<u>Number</u>
1. Poor job responsibility (i.e., attendance & punctuality)	
2. Problems with social competence	
3. Inadequate vocational competence/Productivity	
4. Family Reasons	
5. Other (please specify).....	

*****THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM*****

Appendix 9

LIST OF TOPICS TO COVER WITH MANAGERS

History of Project

Program Content & Emphases

Key Values & Philosophy/ Main Goals or Purpose

Operational Definition of Supported Employment

Supported Employment within a Spectrum of Other Services

Outcomes of Supported employment

Managing the Service & Staff

Approach to Consumer Autonomy, Choice & Rights

Quality

Documentation - obtain copies of reports, blank forms eg vocational profile.

(Probe on any terminology used eg "supported employment", "real job", "job taster", "job placement")

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Appendix 10

CHECKLIST FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE/PROJECT

Compiled over extent of the fieldwork. Collect photos and documents of the project/service. Tour the neighbourhood. Examine the written and verbal descriptions of the project/service (literature, leaflets, reports, information packs). Observation notes.

Name of project: _____

Dates & Hours Spent Observing Project: _____

Total Hours/Days spent in project

Background Description:

- What is it and where is it?**
- Physical features including setting/ location & accessibility**
- Names, logos**
- Atmosphere**

Staff:

Characteristics of the relationship between staff and clients

What kind of service do people get?

Roles & Responsibilities of staff

Orientation towards integration

Tasks performed - record frequency

Operation of the Project:

Selection & Referral

Process of compiling vocational profile - time spent gathering information re
person's desired job, interests and preferences

Process of Job Matching

The Support Given to Clients:

Decisions re when support is withdrawn

How service is targetted

How support decisions affect service

Other Issues Emerging

Appendix 11

PROJECT WORKER INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

(PRE-MEASURE)

Project Name:

Worker Interviewed:

Name of Supported Employee:

Age:

Definition of Supported Employment

Q1. Can you tell me something about what supported employment means in the context of your work with this individual?

Q2. How are you currently involved with this person?

Q3. Has a vocational profile been completed? Yes/No

Q4. How long did it take to compile?

Background

Q5. Are they registered disabled? Yes/No

Q6. Has the person's level of disability been assessed?

Q7. From your experience, what are the most effective ways to communicate with and get to know this person? Effective strategies (for example, having someone else present, sign language, through pictures)

Skills

Q8. In relation to skills, are there any areas or skills which you have been working with this person or you envisage will need attention?

- (Prompts
- 1. social skills/competence, social mixing
 - 2. self care eg personal hygiene
 - 3. travel
 - 4. job skills (a) Performance
 (b) Task based)

Finding Suitable Jobs

Q9. How did you gather information about the person's desired/preferred job characteristics, social interests and preferences?

(Prompts:

- * Does the person like to be around other people?
- * Is the individual shy or outgoing?
- * Do they prefer to spend time with individuals who have characteristics in common eg, age, gender, culture, hobby related?
- * Happy in a crowded noisy room or is a quiet isolated setting preferred?)

Q10. How did you reflect this information in the selection of a suitable job and work site?

Q11. What were the **most important factors** taken into consideration in matching this person with the job?

Strategies for Involving users and their Carers

Q12a. Is the worker participating in the selection of his/her work environment: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe how.

Q12b. Is the worker participating in the selection of his/her work activities: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe how.

Q13. Does a reasonable match exist between the work environment and activities and the worker's preferences?

Q14. Describe how the person's carers/guardians have been involved, for example in selection of work environments, providing transport?

Outcomes of Employment

Q15. What do you predict the outcomes from supported employment will be for this person?

Material Situation

Q16. What DSS Benefits and/or Income does the consumer currently receive? (i.e. pre-employment)

Income Support:

Unemployment Benefit:

Invalidity Benefit:

SDA:

DLA:

Other:

Q17. Will they be better/worse off financially with this job and by how much?

Training & Support

Q18. What level of support will this person receive from the supported employment team and for how long?

Q19. Are there any limits to the amount and duration of on- the- job support this and other individuals receive? (prompt re whether limit of say 6 to 12 weeks is operating)

Q20. What happens if the job changes or they want to change job?

Social Integration

Q21. Knowledge of person's social network: Who does the person spend their time with socially? Friends, family, neighbours.

Q22. Social activities/Hobbies/Community Integration

Q23. Formal Services and Supports They Receive. (who is paid to spend time with them?)

Any Other Comments?

Julie Ridley (1995)

Appendix 12

PROJECT WORKER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (POST-MEASURE)

Project name:

Worker interviewed:

Name of supported employee:

Process of Supported Employment

- Ask job coach to describe what happened in relation to:
 - (a) Job analysis.
Documentation? Does analysis include informal tasks important to social inclusion.
 - (b) Job support.
How was the support strategy arrived at for the person?
How did it work out in practice?
Length of time of on-the-job support.
 - (c) Progress monitoring.
What long term plans have been made to review the situation and make long term future plans?

Outcomes

- What have been the outcomes of supported employment in terms of social integration, quality of life, money in particular?
- Has the person been better off in any way as a result of employment?

Job Loss

- What were the factors that contributed to this?
- Could anything have been done differently?
- Any comments about future plans in respect of further job opportunities?

Future

- What are considered to be future issues for this person particularly in terms of:
 - a) their dreams and aspirations
 - b) other jobs/future job matches
 - c) social integration
 - d) real job (whether the fact that a placement made it less for the person than paid job)
 - e) career planning

Other Issues

- Any other issues you would wish to highlight in respect of this individual?

Julie Ridley (1995)

Appendix 13

PROJECT WORKER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (POST-MEASURE IN EVENT OF JOB LOSS)

Project Name

Name of JobC interviewed

Name of supported employee

Confirm job details

Check address is same & living situation

Change in marital status?

Supported Employment Process

- Job support.
 - duration
 - level of support
 - why
- Why job terminated.
- Lessons learned for future.
- Progress monitoring.
 - Long term plans & review
- Any particular challenges?

Job Context

- Job Aspects
 - characteristics of the company - size, work environment, colleagues supportive, local/national, equal ops policy.
 - factors in termination of job?
- Job match - comments re termination.

Outcomes

- Individual outcomes overall, both positive and negative (separate sheet)

Future Plans

- Future issues for this person, particularly:
 - a) their expectations
 - b) other jobs/future job matches
 - c) social integration
 - d) financial implications
 - e) career prospects

Other Issues

- Success of service for individual
- Any other issues you would wish to highlight in respect of this individual?

Julie Ridley (1996)

Excerpts from interview set pertaining to one individual

(Text not in Ethnograph Format for ease of reference)

cerpts from first interview with S

I've applied for various jobs from the Project but I've not heard from any of them, the only one I heard from was the job, and there's one starts on Tuesday so I'm just hoping it will last a lot longer than a few month. If it doesn't, if it lasts 3 months it won't really bother me cause at least it will be experience in retail anyway about warehousing er, if any other jobs come up that are in shops or store rooms at least I can say well I've worked in so and so for a year, ple of years in their warehouse, college stores for a limited time, so you've got experience with some aspects of ig, warehouse management, so if you can show them you can work by yourself, they just leave you to get on with it.

Yeah, sometimes it helps doesn't it to be able to say you've had experience and you've done the job it can help you another job can't it rather than being unemployed for ... but first of all thinking about having a job what were your ons for wanting a job in the first place, what kind of, that led you onto wanting this job?

I really want to do something with my time cause if I wasn't doing something then I'd just be sitting in the house ig nothing. Or going up the town, waste my time up the town. Em, just sit and watch the telly and vegetate.

Are you someone who likes to be active?

I liked the, to do something with my time rather than waste time not doing anything.

Right, right so you're expecting that a job will give you some structure to the day and the week. Right, and what, t else is important about having a job to you?

Meeting people, different people do different things, you might go out, go out for a drink on a Tuesday night or ething.

Is this people from work you're thinking about?

Yeah, at least meeting different people you get to know them better, you broaden your horizons, make friends and rience.

Right, what about money, having, would you be having more money through the job that you have now?

es.

Is that important to you?

oday, now, well you have to spend money if you want to go anywhere. It's kind of expensive, but the more money /e got at least you'll be able to lead a semi decent life.

Right, so having more money will give you opportunities to do things that you can't do right now because you n't got the same amount of money. Well, what kind of things are you thinking about when you say that?

o out for a drink with your friends, have a game of snooker, go to the pictures.

Cause a pint's quite expensive now isn't it?

es, its about £1.50 or something.

And what about things like independence and control of your life, do you think having a job can have anything to ith that, can it have any change on that?

eah, you can have a bit more independence and do what you want to do rather than if you're on something like ne Support where you wait each week if you've got money in the bank you can just go to the bank get some y out and do something rather than waiting for a Wednesday, you get your money then havin' it spent by the day.

Of all the things we've talked about what's most important about getting a job for you?

Probably er meeting more people and getting experience.

Can you tell me what would be your dream job, any job at all?

Probably something that I've done before that you can just walk into. You don't need training, just walk in, this is what I can do, all right fine, knowing exactly what the job entails and you just walk in get started and they leave you to

Right, right so its being competent and skilled to do a particular thing and feeling really confident about being able to in and say yes I can do that. And, can you tell me something about what you currently do, what do you do now in your time, what happens for you during the week, you don't go to a day centre, I don't think do you?

No.

No, em, so what do you do with your time in the week?

usually go swimming on a Tuesday night but with the job starting I'll have to give it up unfortunately.

Why is that is it linked to the job start?

Vell, with the job that I'm starting it doesn't finish till about half past 8 at night ..

Oh I see, I'm with you now.

So the swimming that I went to starts at 7 and finished at 8 so unfortunately I'll have to give it up.

What are the hours that you're going to be working then S and which days?

half past 12 till half past 7 on a Tuesday and Thursday. So if the, if that's the days I'm going to be working unfortunately I would have to give up the swimming unfortunately.

Right, okay, what do you get up to now during the week?

perhaps go out with a friend during the day or at night when I'm not working and if he's not working we can meet up for a drink go and see a film, just see how things go from there and then perhaps arrange another day from there.

Well, thinking about the last couple of days, let's think about what you did on Monday, what did you spend your time doing on Monday?

got up about eight o'clock or something. Just sat in the house watched a video, take the dog a walk, perhaps go up town, just looked in the shops and come home, watched a bit of telly at night.

What about Tuesday, can you remember what you did Tuesday?

roughly the same, went somewhere at night, come home.

Do you tend to go to bed at certain times?

usually go to bed about 11 o'clock.

What about yesterday, that's Wednesday isn't it, do you remember?

; I was gonna cash a giro and spend it on a few messages for my mum then come home, then went up town, em, it myself a video then come home, watch some telly then went to my bed.

Have you any particular friends or relatives that you spend time with, you mention, I think you mentioned a friend you like meet up with a go out for a drink after work.

Yeah A, he works usually at night doin', usually works at night cleaning offices so we usually meet up during the week if we can or we might meet up at the weekends.

Right, do you see him every week?

No. Just depends what we're doing, if we can meet up we meet up if we can't we make it another week.

So maybe every 2 weeks, 2 or 3 weeks?

Say so yeah.

So do you, cause what I'm trying to do is build up a picture of what your life's like at the moment, and who you spend your time with, would you say that you spend most of your time with your family here?

Imh.

More than anybody else?

Yeah, mostly I'm in the house or down the town, seeing my Nan on a Saturday or during the week, if she needs anything done get her shopping done for her.

Do you go with your parents to see her or on your own?

Usually go down on my own on a Saturday, usually there's a few of us go down for lunch and then just to see her cos she's with herself all week so it can get a bit boring cause she can't get out.

.....

Right, so you, when you're at home are you spending time with your mum and dad or are you in your room listening to records or something or watching TV or?

I'm usually in my room listening to tapes, watch some telly.

.....

And what, what about your hobbies, what are the things that you like to do?

Usually go out and play snooker if I've got the money or just go out swimming on Tuesday nights, meet up with friends there.

.....

Where do you go swimming?

Er, its, its really kind of a community classes run by the college, er, run a club, go to galas er, usually get points at them they always have the various galas.

So have you got friends there? People that you have come to know through the swimming club?

Yeah, a few of the people that go there I met at school and ...

So the things you like to do are swimming and playing snooker? And you spend a lot of your time at home and listening to your records, CDs and you take the dog out for walks?

Usually on a Thursday my mum's down at college at an art class so by the time she finishes that gets back is back at work gets something to eat gets changed for her work, she's hasn't got enough time to take the dog out so I usually take a quick walk and then come home. What else? Go to meet a friend or something or go the town myself.

Do you not go to something through the organisation, 'cause Linda thought when she worked there sometimes, y organised discos and social events?

Yeah, went to a couple of discos that they had. They usually organise them for like fund-raising, to get some money, to keep the place running cause they've got various houses and the jobs project.

.....

Em, L told me you have a sister. Does she live at home, is she younger?

Older.

So, do the 2 of you get on okay?

As much as brother and sister do. We always have fights but we wouldn't be normal if we didn't. We've always been fighting even before we moved into here. Our rooms used to be plaster board walls that used to separate our rooms so we used to be fighting matches with music or that she'd have hers up load then er just be a case of me turning me up, we used to get really annoying. My room was about half way up the lobby it would be kind of travelling through to the living room, fighting matches.

How did you find out about the jobs project?

From college. They used to be based there.

What's your understanding of supported employment, what do you think, what does it mean?

Well supported employment it can go on the jobs training with you once you feel satisfied you can do a job they'll take you off and let you get on with the job. If you feel you need a bit more support they'll come back and give you that bit more support and then you could get on with the job.

And, this particular job that you're going to start next Tuesday do you feel that it's your own choice and it's your decision to take that particular job?

Uhuh. The jobs project they find jobs for you and say look we've got this particular job in say B&Q would you like to go for it? And if you fancy doing it they'll chase it up an, take you, they'll take you for interview and then if you're going to do the job help you out with the support and with benefits your entitled to, and let you get on with the job. If you didn't fancy the job they've found then it might be somebody else on their books that fancies it so

So they give you that choice and they talk to you about it and it's up to you to say no I don't fancy that?

Yeah.

Have they offered you a job and you've said no that's not what I want to do.

Was this light company you were just standing building lampshades and lights that would be really it didn't really work so L phoned me about it she said do you want to go for it or no no it'd just be standing in one place and not dealing with the public.

.....

So would you say are you satisfied with and happy with the way things have gone through the jobs project and the way you've got from them?

mh. Yeah. If it was left up to me I'd still really be looking for a job now it's what I finished the YT in August last so it's been about 6 months or something like that I've been looking for a job, just sitting in the house doing nothing. The jobs project they're looking for jobs all the time. If something comes up they say look we've got something you fancy going for it or do you fancy doing something else? They like they work on your experience that you've got. They'll try and find a job where that experience is needed. With the last job, it wasn't really experience I'd had

I was willing to give it a try anyway but unfortunately I got paid off, so really looking for something that I can do
I given the support to get settled and that's it.

Right, now thinking about the kind of choices that you make in your life, do you make a decision when you go out
when you come in, do you have to be in by a certain time, you have your own front door key?

Usually say when I'm going out, who I'm going out with, say whether I'll be back about 10 o'clock or something so
I know where they are. Just sitting and reading a book or something and they hear someone coming in they'll say oh
I'm coming in from meeting A or J, coming in from S's or something. . So they know who's coming in roughly when
I'll be in.

And do you decide who you spend your time with in terms of your friends and what about do you get to go on
day?

I've been on holiday with mum and dad now its I'll probably go on holiday myself ma friend spend a weekend
nowhere. The real problem is money, getting the money together and if you can budget for yourself.

.....

Do you decide which clothes you wear and decide which clothes, do you go shopping for your own clothes?

Mostly I do but if my mum sees something up town t-shirts or something she'll buy them and I just give her the
money for them.

But mostly you choose your own stuff and is it your, when you get ready in the morning its entirely up to you,
quite independent that way?

Yeah.

And its up to you when you decide what time you're going to bed and when you get up in the morning is it?

—Imh.

And is it entirely up to you how you spend your money?

Yeah.

Does anybody else tell you how to spend your money?

No.

How do you feel about your current social network, do you think its okay as it is or could be better or would you
like to be

I probably like to have a bit more friends closer to home than just now. Living here I've got to get the bus in or get
us across town to meet friends. When we lived in X before it just a matter of walking up the road and you had
friends there, so. you could either go up and see them or.....

.....

—We kinda lost touch.

Are they people that you knew through school?

mh.

Would you ever feel lonely?

No. You can always like I say its only a phone call, just sit and talk on the phone or meet up and talk face to face.

Right, so the person you would meet up with and then telephone that would be mostly A?

Hmh or another friend.

Its just that earlier on you didn't mention anybody else specifically

Hmh well I've known Andrew for about 7 year.

Are there other people then that you phone or that you go out with at the moment?

Uhhh people that I've known since primary, or I've met through college if we're both free or that we can arrange to
out for a drink or go and play a game of snooker.

Okay, can I ask you some specific questions about who gives you the following support in your life really. What
ou wanted to talk to someone because you'd had a row or a fight with someone close to you, your parents or your
er or a girlfriend or something like that, who would you talk to?

Usually just talk to my friends about it probably all been through the same thing and probably done it somewhere
then maybe decide from there.

Who are your main friends who would talk to you?

Um, A and my friend D or one of my friends from primary.

Who's someone that you could tell secrets to, say for instance that there was someone that you particularly liked
you wanted to talk to somebody about?

Probably A again.

If you're feeling really upset or sad or disappointed about something like maybe when you lost the job and you
ed to talk to someone about it, who would you talk to then?

Um, my mum or my dad.

If you were going to, say you were going to have an operation where you needed some kind of medical treatment
ou wanted to talk to someone about that?

Um, my mum, my dad or one of my friends.

So if its more personal do you talk to your friends and if its sort of more general do you talk to your mum or dad
d you say that's true?

Usually mix about, probably been through that operation or something themselves so they can tell you there's
ng to it.

If you needed someone to feel comfortable with who would lend you some money because the bank or the bank
ine's closed or you've forgotten your wallet.

My mum or my dad cos they get money in and I can give it them back when I've got it.

What if you needed, say in the house, some milk, bread, sugar etc and you'd run out and the shop was closed, who
you rely on to borrow anything?

Probably just borrow it and give it back later on.

What if you didn't have anything in the house would you be able to go to neighbours, do you have friendly neighbours ... does that not really happen?

No.

Right, is there someone you could approach if you needed help or advice about anything?

Probably generally just talk to my mum and my dad. If it was something like benefits I'd talk to somebody in the project, I'd go to somebody who specifically deals with benefits.

And what about getting advice if your moving to a new flat or a new house or something, who'd give you that sort of advice?

Em, probably I'd get as much advice as I could from the prospective Landlord, people who have moved into flats are just try and get as much advice from them.

Is there someone at the moment who's advising you about supported accommodation?

Yeah, somebody at the Social Work Department.

Who'd give you help with your money or if you needed to sort out a bill?

Em, my mum or dad.

What about if you were, say you wanted to change your hairstyle or try a new style, who's a person that you'd turn to and say do you think that suits me?

Probably friends.

People the same age as you and would you say there are people in your life who tell you you're looking great or you did that really well? Do you get praise from anyone?

Yeah, again mostly from friends.

What sort of things do they say?

That was alright, if I've done something try it this way, try it that way, just try it and see if you can do a bit better.

.....

I was needing a lift in car somewhere it would be my dad.

Who would look after your house or your plants or your dog say when you went away on holiday?

Look after the house would be a friend and put the dog into kennels.

Who'd get your shopping with you if you had a problem with that?

Em, probably ask mum and dad to go.

Who would help you decorate a new flat or a new house?

Friends, family.

If you left home would there be someone where you could stay, just temporarily?

Em, friends.

And if you needed to get to hospital because you were sick who would help you to get there?

Probably my mum and dad.

Who would you choose to celebrate Christmas or New Year with?

Family.

Do you have a big family get together at Christmas?

Yeah. We usually go out to where my uncle lives and celebrate Christmas there or we just do it ourselves here.

Have you any cousins and that out there as well?

Yeah.

Who would go with you to see a film that you fancied seeing or out for a meal or to the pub?

Em, friends.

Would that be like A?

Imh.

Em, someone you could go on holiday with?

Em, A.

Someone who'd meet you for a drink on a Friday or a Saturday night?

Or my other couple of friends.

What would you say just in general about your life at the moment S, would you say that it was good, that you happy with it or there's like, or are there things that you'd like to change that, with having a job you're working towards changing those and getting a different kind of life for yourself, what would you say?

Probably, like to drive get a bit more freedom, you can get out more instead of just wasting money on bus fares at if you can drive you can just jump in the car go somewhere spend a day out somewhere and then come home. If I'm trying to get a job you know paid monthly or that and you have to try and get money for bus fares to go somewhere.

Right, so you'd really like to learn to drive.

Yeah.

Right, you said earlier on that a job, you might meet new people as well Friends from work and that sort of thing. Do you feel happy with your life?

Yeah.

Do you feel happy with yourself, do you feel satisfied with yourself, do you feel good about yourself?

humm.

And what do you think are your best features, what do you like most about yourself and your life?

Probably that I've got a lot of friends that I can rely on if I need any kind of help, they'll be there if they really can't. Probably, if they can't probably just turn to my family.

And what sort of person would you say you were?

I'd say I was alright to get on with. Fairly outgoing, willing to try new things, meet people.

Excerpts from second interview with S 25.04.96

as moved into supported accommodation since the first interview. He has also lost the job he started. The interview begins with general questions about his new accommodation and area.....

So have you got a better social life now you live here?

CD: Well its, it is a lot cheaper yeah.

Do you get out more than before when you lived with your mum and dad?

CD: Uhm. Every since ah moved here I go out more when ah lived at home, it was ken sit in the house and watch tcos.

You've been in a couple of places since leaving home is that right?

CD: Yeah. I was in a house ah shared with one other person.

Right, and how long did you live there?

CD: Ehm 8 months.

Right so it happened soon after you got the job didn't it?

CD: Uha.

Right, but it must have been quite a big change moving, starting a job and moving out of home from home as ?

CD: Eh right. The only reason that ah left the job was getting on top of me getting new jobs just settling into a new settling into a new house, its fairly hard for anybody. You just try to settle into some kind of routine wi a job then w house.

Yes it takes quite a lot of adjusting doesn't it?

CD: Uhm. When ah moved it was quite easy to adapt, quite easy ah spoke to the person so he's getting up early going away to his work.

Uhm.

CD: An now works there, ah lost contact with him, well ah had some contact but not very much, then I moved right less and less, lost contact with folk.

And the next place you moved to that was nearer to where you worked?

CD: Yeah it was nearer to ma work. It took about it was about half an hour walk, its about 3/4 hour to an hour in us.

Is that what you used to do then, did you use to walk to work?

CD: Well it saved on the bus fares.

.....

So is this close to where you used to live then?

D: Yeah. Ah lived about 3 minutes walk away.

Uhm. So what what how do your parents what do they think about your move.

CD: They thought it was quite good, eh one of the best things was because of my dad's job ah could get to ma-
nas if he can't so if she's needing something from the shop ah could go along and get it for her.

Right.

CD: Save ma dad getting away fa his meetings or something on. She's 81 an she lives on the top floor eh
nothing like this.

.....

Uhm. So do you see your family a lot, do you see your mother?

CD: Yes ah usually go up twice a week an come back here and spend watching the telly. We hardly see ah the-
e, thats cause by the time yi get up in the morning the other folk who live here are away out doing something.

Did you know anybody before you moved in here or were they all new people to you?

CD: They're all new. Ah came down to see this eh ah met them then but that didna matter that ah knew people in
area.

Right.

.....

CD: Every tenant has a tenancy agreement that they've got to stick to.

Right. So what do you do with yourself then Stuart?

CD: Oh - go an see ma parents every week, go swimming once a week.

....

Is that what you were doing when I saw you about 9 months ago, I think you were, is that something you do with
dad?

CD: No. Its a community class. I've gone there since I moved.

.....

Uhm right. So do you stay up late watching films?

CD: Yeah. Its a bad habit that I've got in to.

So what time do you stay up to?

CD: Sighs - the latest I would say, I was up to about 3 o'clock.

No wonder your tired.

CD: Before I moved into the other place, we went to see A ma old flat mate what usually gets we call it an all-
er so I'll take up some videos and we'll stay up all night and watch videos.

Uhm.

D: That was before he got a job at the Airport.

Right.

ICD: You know its just something I've that's the kind of routine I've got in to stay up all night. Usually get up in morning you find that a couple of days later just totally wrecked.

Well what about when you were working did you stay up late then?

ICD: Yes - I didn't start till about 12 o'clock so I could stay up.

So you could have a lie in in the morning then?

CD: My shift changed to about so I started at 10 half 10 so that kinda put a stop to the all night video sessions.

So what what is what's much of you week like then do you do certain things on like Monday, Tuesday?

CD: Well usually do usually do shopping on a daily basis and get staff up for about 5 hours, talk about any blemes.

5 hours a day?

CD: Yeah like I get 30 hours a week.

Right.

CD: Ehm just talk about any problems we've got with the house tenants or anything, like social work benefits, 'll help you sort them out the best they can.

Right.

.....

S tell me - I talked a wee bit about the job that you had, uhm can remember that far back, you remember, can you you describe for me what the job was and what the place was like where you worked?

CD: It wiz a warehouse ken warehouse general assistant.

Right.

.....

CD: You'd get about 300 packets of silk on hangers already so just need to take all the plastic and put them on a er rail. Then take them out the back.

Was it a clothes shop then?

CD: It was kinda clothing, cash and carry kind of.

Uhm.

CD: They have like we only stick to clothes and I usually get on with unpack clothes when deliveries about 300 - boxes of clothes or kitchen ware, but there are other things that they sell in the shop. The hardest thing was if you about sort of about 100 boxes carboard boxes where to put them all, and you had to clear that so that you could room for how many boxes that were coming in.

Right, so there was quite a fast turnover?

CD: Yeah the van had 35 mintues to get turned round, we were the last stop on his run so you'd be taking all the s off as quick as possible and trying to make sure you didn't have any discrepancies or boxes missing, boxes open to other stores. There were a few times we did find a couple of boxes that was meant to go to another store but missed came to us, so we sent them back on the low van. And if you were a box short that item on another ery day we will keep it and just mix into our stock, but that rarely happened. It wiz mostly quite a hard job to do ou got one what were called Mailer which was a wee catalogue with special offers.

: Mailer, mail order sort of thing was it?

CD: It wizna like a mail order it wiz kinda like a catalogue but you had to go into the store to buy it.

: Right.

.....

Did you work with other people, was there a team of people?

CD: Yeah there is a team of us there's usually about 3 at the warehouse and (pause) . ehm the most annoying thing is staff off the shop floor coming in you know maybe ask me need that need this, and would go into all the hanging racks pulls the stock and they have about 200 boxes of fresh stock to go out so we take it out to the shop floor put it at side of the rail and they bring it all back in. Like we've got like 3 rows oh hanging rails about 30 foot high full of stock we've nay room so what are we going to do wi it. That was quite annoying people came in says look no room for you ultimate them your no taking it back.

Right. So that was sometimes a bit of friction was there between the shop floor staff and the people like yourself who were working in the storeroom?

CD: Yeah. You could get a oh dear and you could go and look for other rails and they're sitting on the shop floor in a pile of stock from say about 3 days ago so you end up having to find as many rails as you can or pile stuff on floor. Like the Assistant Managers come into the warehouse work there an he's clears 4 sections of the hanging racks so at least we dinna need to go hunting for to hang it on the rails.

What about your works supervisor how did you get on with your work supervisor?

CD: Got on quite well with the manager. Came in and didn't have a clue how the system worked out so that was a bit of friction.

Oh right you had a supervisor in the warehouse did you then there was a manager above him?

CD: Uhm that came in and we were working at our pace which was still getting a good stock turn around but ehm when the manager came round he reorganised the whole warehouse so it was a bit of friction for the first few days that was there.

Right. So a lot of staff changing all the time?

CD: Yeah

People coming in with new ideas and changing things and then nothing really allowed to carry on as it was is that right?

CD: Yeah You work away that jobs getting done then they'll come in an say ah ... do it this way. We me particularly the staff come in would you do this would do that would you do this, but I've got about 200 boxes to check and hang or an put tags on.

So was there quite a lot of pressure on you in this job did you feel?

CD: Yes.

Cause that was one of the things wasn't it that you were wanting to avoid was having pressure on your in the job wasn't it?

CD: Uhm

.....

: That was when it was difficult for you. Right you've ehm, how did you feel about the job did you think it was
at, was it boring, was it hard work, was it enjoyable, what kind of, how would you describe it, I mean you said
lier on I think that it was pretty hard work.

CD: It was quite hard work an quite enjoyable.

You enjoyed the task that you were doing?

CD: I enjoyed the work I'd been 2 years in retail stock for on the outside on the customer service side and then ah
oyed to be honest wi mysel ah enjoyed that more than working in this job in the warehouse - like you have a lot
re contact an there's a lot more relaxed.

Which job is that you're thinking of?

CD: That was B & Q that I was working in.

Right. Was this a placement when you were at college?

CD: Yeah. Ehm it was a lot more relaxed so you could do you job and do it in the time it would take you, instead
omebody saying ooh I need you to do this to do that. There sometimes that might be happening but its having be
e that minute you could finish what you're doing

Right. So if you were looking for another job in the future that would be the kind of job you'd look for is it?

CD: Something wi a bit more relaxed atmosphere.

Uhm.

CD: An you could go into the job an you know you know you could do one task at a time something like five tasks
ometimes.

Right.

CD: By the time you get home an that your knackered an you only want eh, your that knackered an that ... probably
e you want to hit somebody and its no very fair on the people you live wi if your coming home and you really
y cheesed off an you want to go oot and hit somebody cause more than likely you'd turn roond and hit your flat
an he's got nothing to do wi it.

Is that, is that how you felt.....it sort of built up inside you?

CD: Yeah, when your daen five jobs at once its annoying like. Should leave yi to dae yir job.

Uhm. And were you able to say that to anybody that's how you felt, are you the kind of person that sort of do you
e things up and keep it to yourself?

CD: Ah dinna really bottle things up but if somethings annoying me ah'll say so, like staff coming ah need you to
his and just turn roond fine am daen something else I've got aboot four other jobs it'll have to wait.

Yeah so you really could'nt really do anything it in the end, they were being unreasonable.

CD: Yeah well I felt like saying well get sombody else to do it but eh canna come in and do something everthing
wants me to do cause nothing in the warehouse will get done.

Right

CD: An if I dinna dae the job that ah applied for I'll get the sack. Its not fair on the other two guys in the
house if they are coming in at 12 o'clock and you've been in for 2 hours and done nothing in the warehouse.

Right yeah.

.....
: What would you say were the most important things about being in work, I mean I know it sounds like there were
ne negative things those people changing their routines and sounds like there was too many chiefs, but the sounds of
at your saying.

CD: Yeah too many Chefs an that.

Yeah. What made you get up in the morning, what was important about being in work?

CD: Probably cause I had money in my pocket.

Right.

CD: So I went into work and.....if you
ed money there was money there.

Right. So were you happy with the wages part of the job?

CD: Yeah.

Was it quite well paid?

CD: I had money in my pocket and ah didna need to, I was getting out the house, not just the one routine sitting
ching tele all day

So it was giving you more of a purpose?

CD: Yeah.

and structure to your life?

CD: If ye want to dae something you going you mae as well go oot and hae a joab than stead of sitting in the house
ching the tele. Like one day the tele could be really crap.

.....

Uhm. So what about now, how do you feel about now?

CD: Well now I'm sitting in the hoose looking at tele daen nothing. I just sit up there and watch the tele.

So are you hoping to get another job in the future?

CD: Yeah well I'm actually looking for a job the now so. I'm still look for a job but ehm I'm looking for a job so at
theres no all my fault finding a job so I have the responsibility of actually going out and finding a job.

Uhm - looking in the Job Centres and newspapers.....?

CD: Yeah looking the evening news or go along to the Job Centre and if I'm passing somewhere an its got a wee
g in the window saying staff wanted I'll go in get an application form an fill it and give then it back.

Right. Are you seeing the project regularly at the moment?

CD: Seen them a couple of weeks ago.

Right.

CD: Theres no any jobs around and if they do find a job they usually phone me an tell me I've got a job for you its
ours in Texas Homecare or go for an interview an that and wait for a response an like a lot of interviews that I've

er to myself, the jobs I've found ehm say alright then we'll thanks for coming we'll let you know in 2 weeks down the e for nothing.

: Uhm.

CD: The last one I went to was at Shell Garage. They said I'll let you know in a couple of days and that was what 4 month ago, says kinda puts a downer on the whole aspect if somebody saying alright fine we'll let you know in a couple days and your don't hear anything, and I've must have had 4 or 5 jobs like that.

: Yeah. You start to not believe them then the next time around.

CD: Yeah uhm. I applied for a job with the B & Q that ah worked with when I was at college an they says thanks coming we'll let you know in a couple of days then we'll send you a letter.

Uhm.

CD: And eh your unsuccessful this time but we'll keep your name on record so if something comes up we'll gie you phone line that kinda says at least their taking the time to interview you and then gie you a response.

Yeah, yeah.

CD: Like you dinna have to go to this company for a job interview if they're going take if they canna take the time to phone you or write to you and gie you ah response then

Yeah its quite disappointing

CD: or you've got the job or sorry

S I've got some photographs here that try to show different things that people get out of work. I want you to look them and to pick the ones that you think apply to your job. I'll just turn the tape off a minute..... So having a job -le you feel better about yourself. How does it do that?

CD: Yeah its like it would git me oot the hoose and you had something to do like maybe say the public or whoever r dealing with can all they need cause you take the time to go somewhere to do a job of work. So like they are ing on you to be there to help them out if they've got any problems, might have might be redecorating their house or they canna decide on what colour think of an you can always put your piece in so that you help them make a final sion between a couple colours of paint or what.

Oh alright - is this were you referring to when to B & Q? Right.

CD: You can get talking to the customers you might think somethings a good wallpaper I mean like its saying like one and another one and you can help them make a final decision, an they're helping you and keeping you in a job your helping them and what kinda happen paper the walls.

So then that means that you feel better about yourself because your doing something that is valuable to other ple as well. You've also chosen having a good wage as important.

CD: Yeah at least have money in my pocket and I could go up the town and get a couple of CDs or something and o the pictures.

Right. Cause you were struggling before weren't you to find the money to do some of those things, you used to nd do quite a lot of window shopping didn't you.

CD: Well the work experience is helpful cause might it would help you find another job and cause you've got work rience you might get somebody thats new to the company and then if you've got any an they know you've been o for about maybe 3 years before them and you can help them out, helping new staff and customers.

Right okay and meeting people at work - did that actually happen at the place you worked?

CD: Yeah it happened.

: Right.

CD: I had a working employee social life.

.....

: What about work mates or whatever? Do you do you I mean you did have a team of you working in the warehouse?

CD: Yeah.

What things like breaks and lunch and things like that did you get to have share lunch and,

CD: Not so much because there had to be somebody in the warehouse.

Did you have to take you breaks at different times then?

CD: Uhm. So as long as there was two folk in the warehouse, if there was three people in the warehouse, you'd go in and have your break then somebody else would go.

Right.

.....

Right so this one wearing a uniform, why did you choose that one?

CD: Probably again say B & Q have a uniform and it was distinctive like if you were if might be a fairly good day just go to your work in your uniform they had holey shirts, aprons and if its a good day you just turn up to your work its your works polo shirt on and because you then right enough am making oh he works at B & Q and that and so they recognise that and because thats getting recognised cause you give them good cusomter service they'll come back and if your straight wi them like anything they'll sort of say I'm no going back there again I'll go to Texas or

Did you have a uniform in your last job?

CD: No, you didn't have a uniform there.

Right. Now independence thats is that referring to you moving out and being more independent is it?

CD: Yeah. Started work and moved into the house, kinda snowballed then. I tried just to concentrate on the job there was moving into your house you do it up and get it, you need you to do this we need you to do that and.....

Uhm Sounds like a lot of pressure in your life.

CD: Forget this I don't need it. I'm here to do a job of work that keeps you in a job so get off ma case or else I'll be looking for another job.

Uhm. And what about that one, feeling competent?

CD: Again, like B & Q you'll get them all ti yi customer feedback ehm that what they called mystery shopper, just ordinary person off the street would come into the store.

Uhm.

CD: and might have a sheet to ask somebody about power tools or paint, it turned out ehm I was just passing what call the power tool cabinet and this guy stopped is and says can yi tell me about this drill an that. I was standing next to this guy for about ten to fifteen minutes and about a couple of days later when ah came down to start the days work they had kinda meeting about shrinkages some manageress turned aroon and said well S you had a mystery shopper who was asking about power tools.

: And had you done okay?

CD: Yeah I got about 85% or something and so just thought I didn't even have a clue I was just treating him as an ordinary customer.

: Uhm.

: But did you not feel like that in your last job?

CD: I mean you always stuck in a warehouse and I'd never go out the warehouse.

: Right. So because there was all these different demands on you it was difficult to know whether you were doing a good job?

CD: Uhm.

Right. Then there's this control over your own life, why does having a job give you more control over your life?

CD: You can do what eh such as going out going to college and that sitting in a classroom, go out you can sort out your life order better. You've got a reason to get out of your bed every day.

Uhm - do you do you does it make you feel that your controlling it more than other people?

CD: Yeah.

Right and then - working in that's important to you working in an ordinary or a normal work place?

CD: Right. Instead of somebody saying like awe he's ah don't know just because you're in a wheelchair, not does mean your mentally handicapped. Ehm that could be annoying, I know it's alright for me seeing people saying that to a lot of people so it must be really frustrating for them, ah your integrated into a normal store and that like where they're treating you as somebody that can do the job, just because he's in a wheelchair doesn't mean he can't do the job. Like if you can do the job we'll take you on.

Uhm and what about what about yourself at work I mean if you heard the label for your friends do people put a label on you?

CD: No really but. I just hate it when people label ah the people it's like they have a mental handicap and like ah how they feel so I've been in the same boat so.

What do you mean the 'same boat'?

CD: Well when I was younger I had something called hydrocephalus and so some days I don't know.

Right. What about the last one doing something that you enjoy what were you thinking of there?

CD: Ah enjoyed meeting the public and that, making new friends and that

Uhm so it was important in the job to be doing that, but you did not feel that that happened in this job?

CD: Yeah - the jobs that I've had, like in talking to a customer and that having a laugh with them and like it makes me feel easier and then they're alright, first you got ah don't know a pleasant manner you see (can't make out this) people come in to the store to see you and if you treat them like they want to be treated they'll come back if you don't treat the way they want to be treated they'll get the buy whatever they are buying leave and don't and not come back.

.....

Well So of all of these, which one is most important about the job you had?

CD: Sighs. Probably getting a real job, with a real job somebody will hire you for your experience that you can do the job instead of you going in blind and you don't know how to do the job. When I worked at Bingo I'd never worked at a bingo hall before so it was going in blind.

.....

CD: Its important to feel like somebody's counting on me to be there so if you can be there for them then you get decent pay for it.

: How happy were you with your job coach, it was L I think?

CD: Right. It was really helpful cause they already think they done the job for about a couple of days.

: Right so then you so L knew the job inside out before she showed you.

CD: Uhm. I think it takes the strain off the employer. They have somebody come in done the job then shown the way recruit how to do it. So they can concentrate on something while they are getting trained to do the job, and then you do the job the higher you get in the company the more money you get.

Right. And what about the help that you got from L? What did she do, did she help you at work and outside of work as well?

CD: Yeah. Like when like as I say she can take the trouble to actually find a job and how you train to do it, your a lot happier.

Uhm does that make you feel more confident?

CD: Uhm. Like she wont go out and find a job that she cant do she'll get like they get a list of what experiences they've got and they work something out.

Right. So that that's what they're doing going through the vocational profile isn't it?

.....

Yeah. What about the hours that you worked, were you happy with those hours, did that suit you, was that enough or too much or just right?

CD: I think it was enough hours, I was only doing about 16 hours a week.

Right uhm.

CD: Before I had been doing 35 hours.

.....

CD: So that's where you've got a full-time job work Monday to Friday then got Saturday and Sunday to do something you want, which was a lot easier.

Right. Did you have anybody in particular who you got on really well with at work, maybe somebody who you got on in the evenings and weekends?

CD: Didn't really see anybody at the weekends or evenings for work.

Was there somebody that you used to have your lunch with or used to chat to once?

CD: I used to when I was at B & Q, on my lunch break the other trainee that was there we used to go to we used to go in our lunch hour. We just kept talking and he left that placement and went to the Cash and Carry next door so he was there obviously stopped but we used to go over there and get our lunches.

Has, losing the job changed your views in any way about having a job or do you still feel the same about it?

are you still determined to get a job for the reasons we've talked about before?

1CD: Yeah I'm still trying to get a job hopefully it will start at part-time then work up to a full-time job.

: From having that experience do you think it will be different next time, have you learnt anything about yourself about what you actually want out of a job from that experience?

1CD: Its well it showed me what I could do what I really can do so I'll look for a job what I've done in the past.

: Right. So its given you more experience more knowledge of what your capable of and interested in?

1CD: Yeah. I'll look for a job along the lines of customer service work cause ah feel that I can do the job and find a doing that hopefully an employer will see that and then keep me on longer and then I'll have a full-time job.

: Yeah. Did you feel that the when your were doing it that the job changed your life, I know you had you had more money so you were, but were did you find yourself getting out more because you had more money or buying more things or.....?

1CD: I got out more really. Like when I was sitting in the house daen nothing wi nae money it wis tiring and bored so didna get out much then when I had my job it wis like what will I do wi all this money?

And what did you do with it, what did you spend your money on if you don't mind me asking?

CD: Paid my rent, got up to the pictures ehm or to friends. At least you had money in your pocket you could do something at night.

Did you start any new did you develop any new interests or hobbies?

CD: No not really.

No. There wasn't really any new friends from work was there because people didn't socialise outside of work.

CD: Not really.

Alright. How happy would you say you were at the moment with your life overall and thinking about your relationships in particular?

CD: Its quite good cause I've got a lot of friends that are spread out.

.....

Right. Well just the last few questions S cause you've given me a lot of your time and I appreciate that. Just I don't know if you remember the last time I did ask you a few questions about who you would speak to about different things just really asking you who do you turn to for help in certain situations. If we could just go through that - so if needed to talk to somebody because you had a row or a fight uhm and you just wanted to talk about it, it could be a row or a fight with your parents, your sister, girlfriend, boyfriend, wife, or her husband your brother's wife.

.....

2CD: I'd talk to my friends M, there's another couple of friends had at college ehm died and this guy that was on the scene an that said wanna tell him, he was never at the college hardly an in the end just laughed and shrugged it off and when I was in college, then in the end I cause he was laughing it off cause we knew and liked him he just ended up getting what you call a dead leg. Ehm he sort of lay in and said I'm going to get ma old man to yi and ah says fine head. So ah personally I think it is if somebody's died that you dinna laugh at it.

.....

Well what if you were wanted to tell somebody ehm something very personal about yourself or about someone you particularly liked who would you talk to?

ACD: Probably my friends, like things about me or something about my family if I said something what I tell doesn't any further but I know it won't go any further its like mi dad's when he was looking for a cabinet he told me about something about himself he says right that's fine that's no to go any further.....It's why I've kept my friends cause they know they can tell me something, if they don't want it to go further it wont go further you me and the gate post basically. So.

: Yeah, yeah so people can trust that they are going to be able to confide in you and likewise you can then confide them so that so like intimate friends really people that you could trust aren't they?

ACD: Yeah like if you know if they tell you something and don't want it to go further they know you wont tell them anybody else.

: Yeah

ACD: And like mi dad told me he had epilepsy when he was a kid, he says now that's no to go any further than you and the gate post and the only person admittedly that I ever told was A.

Right yeah cause your close friends aren't you?

ACD: Yeah, and I says to him like that's between you me and the gate post and usually when you tell A, he'll not tell anybody else and as you said cause I know you wont tell anybody unless ah say you can tell them

What about if you're feeling very upset or sad or you are disappointed say like when the job ended that sort of thing and you need to talk to someone, who would you talk to?

CD: Probably friends and family.

Right. Have you got people that you can feel comfortable with to lend you money, like lend you a fiver or a tenner or something because your a bit short this week or whatever?

CD: Yeah I've got friends and family that if I wanted. I could borrow from friends and that and they'll know I'll give them back.

Right, and do you do the other way round as well do you lend other people money?

CD: Yeah. Its I reckon its no really fair if they're borrowing if your borrowing money off them owe the time then when it comes to the crunch they need to borrow a tenner you dinna let them down.

Yeah I don't know if this ever happens to you but say you've run out of milk or bread or something in the house and you got can you rely on say the neighbours to borrow some?

CD: No.

No even if its just for the next day.

CD: Sorry ehm the people there you don't get on with them they'll nick stuff out the house. I was told that when I moved in don't trust anybody in this stair cause probably get off you basically.

Who do you turn to for advice, what sort which people do you ask for advice?

CD: It really depends on what kind of problem it is.

Okay what about when you were when you decided you were going to move out of home and you needed advice about moving into a new house?

CD: Probably the Social Work Department and like A he told me about this group.

What about uhm getting help with money sorting out bills who do you turn to for that?

MCD: Uhm bills and that you know they paid them you pay your rent and that.

: Okay. What about if you wanted to change your hair style or you wanted to try something different in clothes those opinion might you ask for?

MCD: Probably just try. If it didna work it didna work.

: Uhm right so you'd be confident enough just to try it yourself.

MCD: Yeah.

: Do people give you praise in your life, does anybody say to you you've done that really well?

MCD: Yeah. Most of then from Job Hunters if there's been like a really difficult customer or something.

: Does anybody say to you you look really nice today do you dressed up or?

MCD: Probably the last time was at my sister's graduation and that and when I sent on and asked about my dad cause he was going along to drop stuff off before he picked me up.

Your dad?

MCD: Yeah he's meant to be well turned out for his job and I think that was really just for a laugh an that.

So he commented on you looking well turned out did he?

MCD: I think that was really like a joke an that and like can have a good laugh wi my dad an that, cause like he says I can have a joke with him and I know where to draw the line. Its like friends I've at school, friends I've had at work and friends I've got outside an that. I know where to draw the line so I wouldn't destroy the friendship.

Who would give you, is there anybody who would give you a lift in a car or come with you on the bus if you needed them to?

MCD: Usually if mi dad if I was off somewhere mi dad will gie me a lift, if he's no got anything on but he when he's going sorted out otherwise I'd just go myself on the bus.

What about looking after the house ehm plants, watering the plants or anything when you go on holiday?

MCD: Ohm mostly it would there is four tenants and so its kinna

So there is always somebody here if you were away/

MCD: There is always somebody here when you're away. When ma mum and dad went away I was kinna sitting the dog so.

Yet you get on it sounds like you get on better with your dad in a way now you have your own house.

MCD: Yeah.

Is that right cause you can have a laugh with him and sort of talk to him, and that seems different than the last time we spoke?

MCD: Yeah. If I've got a problem my dad's had before he'll gi me a hand and that but what was that a few years ago I had an earache an that, it was something along they lines ah always went to ma mum.

Right.

MCD: Its like forget my sister forget my dad I always went to my mum.

.....What about getting shopping do you just do you do your own shopping?

ACD: I usually do day to day shopping.

: So who does that do you go with them one of the staff?

ACD: I'll go myself.

: Right.

ACD: That's what laid down for the house, bread an all sort of

: Right and you also do shopping for your gran as well?

ACD: Yeah.

: What about if you needed help decorating the flat does that just get done for you or do you have to?

ACD: You just get a painter and decorator in to do it.

Right. And what do you use to get to the hospital if you were sick how would you who might you be able to rely for that? What about the people you live with?

ACD: Well is I have to go to the hospital I would go myself but if it was really bad I'd probably, my dad.

Right.

CD: Like if, he when he gets off his work he wants to go home get a good nights kip but if it was really urgent er he come out the house and get down here.

Right - okay. What about, just thinking about socialising now its not long since Christmas and New Year - what you do at Christmas and New Year, did you spend that time with your family and with your friends?

CD: I spent Christmas day and New Years day with my family. On New Years Eve I went up the town. The only g woz it woz jam-packed.

Did you go up there on your own then or did you go up with A or some other friends?

CD: Well I was with A like we've done that for the last couple of years so usually, we got tickets to open air cert. Like last year we just went got some booze an that and listening to the music an that and went back to kinna t that off and then went down to my nannas had a few more drinks then went home and crashed out. Most that is Christmas. Also mum and dads and then usually Christmas Day we all go out dad's brother's. At the New Year well ybody goes to my nannas and she's awful fussy like she say I've done that before they'll in the house until my dad is e. So even although like I was first up the stair I wasna allowed in the house until my dad was up the stair. But 's just my nanna like cause

Has it got to be your dad has your dad got to first foot her or something?

CD: My dad's the eldest of the family so he's got to be in the house first.

CD: His brother is very good to us but he's sister and his brother doesn't see a lot. Might see his sister but his other her is all over the place you can never track him down.

Right. What about your birthday who would you celebrate your birthday with maybe somebody going out with or something?

CD: Family or friends.

Uhm have you had a birthday this year.

MCD: It was January.

: What did you do?

MCD: Went up to Keithall with A.

: What if you wanted to go and see a film or go out for a meal or a disco?

MCD: I'd probably go myself or with friends.

: What about going on holiday do you get to go on holiday, did you get a holiday last year?

MCD: I didn't last year no, I used to go on holiday with mum and dad.

: What about this year have you got anything planned for this year?

MCD: No. Other things are more important.

.....

What about meeting for a drink on Friday or a Saturday night – is there anyone you would meet?

MCD: I'll probably meet ma friends usually ma dads knackered after his work and then he just wants to get in.

Do you socialise with your dad sometimes?

CD: Yeah I usually couple of games of snooker wi him or we might go an see a film or something. The last time I n a film was wi mum we went to see the Jamangi film.

.....

Excerpts from first interview with S's parents

11/05/95

: I started off by saying that, erm, I really wanted to find out what you think about S having a job, we've already started to talk about that. What you think it will mean for him, what you, what you hope S will get out of it, what you expect you will get out of it.

R: S will get all the normal things that anyone gets out of being employed and gainfully employed. Even one day, at night the change in S when he got the job, even to give the reply seemed to give him a boost, yes, and that's normal for most people when they're unemployed.

: Although when you say the change in his demeanour, do you mean his attitude, is it more positive?

R: Attitude definitely.

RS: And a lot happier.

R: A lot happier, you'd be amazed at the change and it's because, the likes of myself have always been employed except for short periods of time, eh, you take things for granted, but I can see the short time I was unemployed maybe years ago, unemployed, and I know what it's like when you're told at 49 that you're no really employable you're a market job it makes a difference in your outlook.

Yes, oh yes, it must. It's actually, it's quite difficult, especially, especially when you've been working all your

: So therefore you need something, they need hope.

Uh huh.

S: S's always felt, even when he was at school, he lacks confidence.

: Yes, self-confidence.

S: As you say, if he keeps getting, as you say, he, he keeps getting jobs, em and they only last a few months, and gets paid off, it's not going to do his confidence any good, even for applying for other jobs, he's going to think / should I bother I'm not going to get anywhere, you know.

: Over a relatively short period of time, say two or three years, what would that do to anybody's confidence? It doesn't matter who, if, it's a person like S or anybody. I would say it would shatter...but I don't think people take enough cognisance of the fact that these are, well, factors in the way that youngsters nowadays, they look for so many different reasons why youngsters become, eh, de-motivated, or whatever you want to call it, apathetic.

So how did, how did you find out about, eh, supported employment?

S: It was ...College, they put him in touch with the project. I don't know, does the project actually work in the college?

: I don't know the exact links, but he was asked.

S: When he finished his course the supported employment project took over and tried to find him work. He got a job in M, which might have worked out if it hadn't been he was handling cash, under a lot of pressure and he was making mistakes counting, which he had to put back, which is a bit of a shame.

: That's right, the stress involved in that, the demand and pressure of people wanting served and that, it was a wee bit unfair to put that pressure on.

RS: The project went up when he was getting paid off, they went up to see if they would keep him on, but they said there wasn't any job that he could do that wouldn't involve handling cash and, you know, counting at speed and being under pressure, and customers queuing and what have you. Even going on the door, I think they must have had to rotate their staff and at one time, they have to handle cash.

: What do you understand about supported employment, what do you think it is?

RS: Well, it's to help him get his...

RS: Get a placement initially.

RS: Into the job market and, support while he's in the job.

: Support in the sense of somebody, like L learning the job and being there with S when he starts?

RS: And helping him with the job, yes, uh huh.

: Do you, do you think that S is making choices and decisions himself about this job and wanting a job? Is, is he someone who makes his own decisions?

RS: Yes, yes, he makes positive choices, whether you agree with him or not, that's a different matter. I remember myself when I was going in and out of different forms of employment, what disagreements I had with my parents at the time and he's just the same as, no he, he disagrees with possibly direction.

RS: I, I'll tell you something, though, that S gets wrong, and he thinks because he worked in retail, he can't do anything else. That he could go for something else, try something else then, broadening your experience, that's he'll say never done that before, and my only experience is in B&Q and Texas and, you know, in the retail and the store side.

: He did some store work.

RS: He did a wee bit store while he was waiting for a placement, he did a wee bit store work over there.

: Em, so some ways, it's em, a matter of confidence then isn't it.

RS: Yes, you say well, maybe you could try something else. "I've no experience in that mum", you know and he's quite, ...and it could end up in an argument so you say well....

: He doesn't take advice readily from us.

: So, although he's made the choice, it's based on limited knowledge of what other jobs are about?

: Yes.

: And how about, I mean, do you feel that you were involved, did the project involve you in this process, in helping find out what kind of jobs S wanted?

: Not to any real extent no. The approach is that they normally come up with a job

RS: They try and make them independent, I mean, there, there's no good in me tagging along with, dad tagging along with him.

: Do you, do you think they've kept you informed, do you think that, that you've been as involved as you'd have expected to have been by the project?

: Not me anyway, I would like to be more involved, I would like to be involved.

RS: See I sort of really took a step back really. You know.

R: The reason I would like, em the way I would like to be involved, is possibly speak to an employer, see what the entails, what the demands are for the job and see what you think they can do, or possibly even do a better job than work, and then maybe provide some support and encouragement as well. I think that's important, but before you can that you've got to understand what the job is about as well. S's very limited, em, when you ask S how he got on it's usually one word "fine".

RS: I was out last night and I came in

R: He did say, he did say, he did say they were nice people to work with, but that's one, one day, he quite enjoyed so I got that right away from his attitude when he came in and his demeanour, em, it was positive for his first day, so, that was a plus. Eh, when I tried to, he just told, I, I asked him what he was doing and he said he was, removing packaging from various items, putting it on racks, whatever, and I tried to find out a wee bit more about the job. But, I don't see it would be unhelpful for likes of myself, if there's a job comes up to go and possibly, interview the bloke it's going to give him the job, or help him, or maybe see how I could help, or see what things it entails.

RS: I mean that's what the project should do. That's what they're there for.

R: Aye, well, you're saying that's what they're there for, ah see I, I feel there could be more support and I'll be best with you, a lot of employers I've come across, half of them they don't eh, realise what they want from staff, their demands change when the staff are employed. It's just a sort of ad hoc. They've no got any training or programme for their staff, which is needed now cause jobs and everything change so rapidly. The employer's got too many other demands on them, just running a business basically, to be really concerned about their staff. If they were more concerned about their staff and their staff welfare, it would, it would be helpful to them, both financially and motivation for staff and like that, it would be a lot better for them. But the majority of employers, small employers I'm talking about, big companies will have eh, eh training programmes and training needs and assessment and things like that in progress and possibly even thinking about, the smaller firms have no got the, the time, or the finances, I would say, to do that.

Right, but then the projects like this project, that's what they're doing, isn't it with the job development workers, sending them out to talk to these employers and try and persuade them to, to give somebody a chance and they'll and put somebody in like L to learn the job?

S: That's what I'm saying. What you're saying you could do is what the project have done for him. They go out and try and find jobs for different individuals and would work alongside them. Ease them into the job.

R: Maybe I've been a wee bit too critical.

S: But, but, but the thing is, I mean,, you say you're doing that, S at his age has got to be independent, feel he's going independent. His, his dad's going along with him to talk, talk, to help.

R: I wouldn't want to go along with him, I would want to go independently from S, ah say, about a job, I mean.

S: He wouldn't accept that.

R: How would he no?

S: Cause he wouldn't. He would take that as interfering.

Is, is it that, that you feel, is it this that you want to be more and to feel that you have more hands on, what, is it you are you're not satisfied with?

R: I'm just not satisfied with what, what they're able to produce or, or the employers that are necessarily interested, cause to me it's basically they want the most or the least, they only want the most out of, that's true of most employers it is, eh, is as much as they can get, but I'll say, what happened, what really annoys me is it's part-time employment right, it's two days a week. Now you're no accruing any pension rights, you've no got the, you've no basic rights of any other worker. That's what's, that's what's wrong with, I think, probably the whole system.

: Is he classed as working 16 hours? With the new, with this new legislation, I think it was this year, people working 16 hours and longer have got the same employment rights, so maybe.

R: Eh, maybe eh covers the employment rights, but what about, but what about, what about benefits and pensions and things? The system's designed to, to, it's all financial, it's designed so that he's effectively financially embarrassed for a period of time, everytime he takes employment, he would be financially, if anybody was looking at it from a parasite point of view, they would say what's the point of starting working for six months or that every time benefits and that, you lose more than just, eh, self-esteem and all the rest of it.

...

R: I get, I get annoyed about the system. It is designed as my daughter, tells us, it's designed to put barriers and hurdles in people's way, especially people like S. Imagine if he'd no got anybody to help him to do that, it's all right doing the project, but these things are happening, it must be terrible, there must be hundreds of people out there they're really suffering.

: So basically when you're saying you're not satisfied, it's basically the benefits system, isn't it and, and how that impacts on somebody like S, and then it's also, the, the part-time nature of the job and you're feeling that in, in a sense it's being also cheated out of what you would consider as a 'real job'?

R: Real job, it's not really a real job, because a real job entitles you to a pension benefits, benefits for, cause when S res...

Right

:in 40 years time or whatever, he's not gonna have a pension fund, how, how could he possibly contribute towards that, his own pension, if, eh, he's no earning capacity, I mean the wages are pitiful, I mean, and they wonder why some people that's got a wee bit, eh turn to crime and things like that it's really...

Yeah.

: The minute you take hope from younger, after a while if you take the hope away from them, they're finished.

S: You know, S's happy enough just to have a job right enough, it's the long term.

: They never, S didn't realise the implications of working 16 hours or working for £3.00 an hour or something like that, or £2.00, S doesn't realise that, that it's ...

S: Well there was one, he went to, had to point out all the disadvantages. I didn't want to say to him you're not getting it, well but it was eh, £2.80 an hour or something, assembling lampshades for £2.80 an hour.

: You're no, you're not getting any job satisfaction out of that and you're not being paid a decent wage. But then in what's gonna happen, I don't know what the rules are they keep changing, the rules for benefits and things, what, it's gonna be the rules for benefits and things what's going to be the effect of S refusing two or three jobs like that, eh consecutively, are they just gonna take him off benefit?

So really, in the, in the long-term you would hope that you would, that this job, either this job would develop into something with more hours, and a bit more security or that it was a different job, but was, that had more security?

: Yes, I think I, I'm being hopeful again, ah think what we, what we as parents, we could hope for in the next years, eh, in the immediate future, if S can get some employment for a sustained period. With a bit of luck S can, eh, gain confidence to maybe take a road that he finds, it may be different, but one that he finds a bit more viable and maybe a bit more lucrative, you know.

Yes, I mean in some ways once you have a job...

R: Yes, S's got most of the basic skills, I would say S could perform adequately in most semi skilled jobs, bookkeeping, eh, plant assembly work, whatever, and he's got an understanding in computers as well. He's, he's quite good that way, he takes things in, he retains things like that, he's.

RS: What S's when he worked with M was the counter, under pressure and writing, it involved a lot of hand writing, can write, but I mean he's skills no very good and his writing. If he's writing a lot, he would have to write things quickly, it would be terrible eh...

R: He, He, He's reasonably intelligent and that, you talk to him about,er, he he's with a video camera, he's better than any of us with a video camera or TV set. Setting things up and he could, he's used an editing suite over there for editing films and things like that so he's got quite a broad range of skills, but they just need to be developed.

: Right, what, what about eh, looking after himself and eh domestic skills?

R: He doesnae excel in that front.

RS: That's what I was saying before you came in and that's part of the reason why he's moving because he just doesnae look after himself and doesn't look after his surroundings, doesn't see the need to clean things up and you know, wash dishes or ...

: He's physically able to do it?

R: Oh yes, he chooses not to do it at home, because he realises if he doesn't do it, at the end of the day we'll do it for him.

What, what about S's, em, current hobbies, and other things that he does with his time?

: Not a lot.

RS: He doesn't do a lot, he said to you that he meets his friend A, they go to the pictures, maybe go for a beer, they go up the town quite a lot to look at the shops.

Do they do that every week?

S: Mostly says "What are you doing,?", "Going up the town". And he'll come back and we'll say "Well what did you do?", "Just went round the shops". He watches telly and he watches videos and he hires videos and that's about it.

: He's no interested in any sports club.

S: Nothing physical, no.

He said something about going swimming em, Tuesday.

S: Goes to swimming, yeah, but that's stopped now cause he's working on a Tuesday.

: He's working on a Tuesday, so he cannae go to swimming. (Big sigh). He's no interested in any of the things I like of golf or what. I, I've tried to get him over the years into playing golf, maybe I took the wrong tack, or maybe he cannae start early enough, but he's just not interested at all.

And he's into computers?

: Oh yes, oh aye. S, if you give S a computer, and eh, I reckon he would apply himself to that because it's a computer and he can sit and now you've got spell checks and thesaurus on computer and I think that was, S wouldnae find

... difficulty in computer stock control. He would be able to, he would soon get the numbers and the hang of the stock control system anywhere. I think, I'd need to, I mean, prove that, but I'm practically certain that would be the case and I think that would be the most rewarding type of employment for S. Something with a stores/retail background with computer input.

...: Hmm, right.

R: Not that he's ever likely to get that, but you've got to get the chance.

...: Yeh, uh-huh, so, eh, does S have friends that come and visit him here, does A visit here?

R: He has occasionally.

RS: He has very occasionally, over the holiday, Christmas, New Year period he came, but most of the time. A has his own flat and most of the time.

R: It costs A, it costs A, it's quite, it's two buses and it's at the other end of town as well, he's not got any friends in the vicinity.

.....

R: His perception of himself is well not very high, his self-esteem is pretty low and that's a consequence of what's happened to him since he's been 15, that's what I would say.

RS: Not since he's been 15, since he started school.

R: Well, since, say well 12, well he was alright up till, but he always lacked confidence, but it didn't manifest itself until say he was 10 or 11.

RS: Cause, I, I mean, he wasn't achieving at Primary School until they found out....

R: There was a variety of reasons for that weren't there, bullying and things like that wasn't he?

RS: We couldn't understand why he wasn't achieving at school. He had a remedial teacher and until we found out, what his learning problems were and what caused it, and by that time he'd had all those years of not achieving, not doing well at school.

R: People think he's lazy, it looked like he was just lazy for say, em, but they say he had that hydrocephalus that wasn't recognised till later on weren't it, when most of his primary education had finished.

.....

RS: But this happened seemingly before he was born and it caused certain areas of the brain to cause certain problems.

R: Well they understood what his problem was, and he got remedial teaching at school, but I mean it is well up till now we thought he's just being lazy.

...: Because he's quite articulate, he, his language ...

S: He, he started school at 4, and I was worried about him starting school at 4. And I went up to see the primary teacher and she sat and chatted with him and he blathered away and she said oh he'll have no problems at school, no, no, quite good, I mean the language he uses, everything's quite good. It was then when he sat down to try and write words, well, his attention span was short, and things like that, it all came to light.

I've covered choice a bit before, and to recap you seem to be saying that S does make positive choices and, and in some ways like, when things like his weekly expenditure his own money, I think you were saying before sometimes his, he has a lot of money, he's just spending it?

RS: He doesn't budget.

Q: And, and does he buy his own clothes and decide what he's going to wear?

RS: Well when he was working His last job, when he got the job, I says now I'll take so much money off you a week and put it aside for clothes and things, pay your digs, and give me a bit extra and I'll put that aside for clothes and the rest's yours, pocket money. He did that no problem, every week I got the money, eh but, apart from that he's just wandered the rest and then we had a big argument about money. So he got his, I told you that, he got his savings book and he just drew it all out and spent it all within the week. So he's no much good where money's concerned.

Q: Does, does he ever choose his own clothes though, does he have to do that?

RS: Well he's a typical man (laughter), as far as that's concerned. Oh god eh, I mean he was starting this job and I didn't know what do you need so do you need? "Sweatshirts, yeah just get me a couple of sweatshirts", you know. I, I mean he wouldn't think of going up the town into a clothes shop and saying oh I've seen a nice pair of trousers or something, you know. It would never enter his head. He'll go into look at videos and tapes and things like that, but no clothes, so I went and got him a couple of sweatshirts.

...

Q: The thing that we're mainly concerned about, is his long term future, em. We've got to, you've got to em, be in', and I've gotta feel I'm doin the best I can from now, but as I say, it'd be nice to know you've got some support from the establishment shall we say.

Q: Right.

RS: I mean, if he does well in this job, he might get kept on full-time, cause he did say at the interview that they'd offered him what he wanted from the job and he said he wanted full time employment.

.....

Discussion ensued about politics, long-term unemployment and the benefits system.....

Excerpts from second interview with S's carer
'05/96

needs structure in his life but nothing seems to have been done since he finished his job. The purpose of moving to that flat was more support but he has less support. He never knows what time the staff will be coming up only that Thursday is his day when he gets a visit. Every two weeks he does his Nan's shopping so sometimes he's not in when the staff come. There's a live in CSV but I'm not sure what she does. They're supposed to go shopping every day.

is getting bored, he's keen to work or so he says. He's so tired most of the time I don't know how he'll cope in work. S very blinkered he won't look beyond retail, B&Q. To apply for a job there he'd have to do till duties and he wouldn't be able to work in a supermarket check out or anything like that. His dad has been telling him to go to college to do a computer course. He has been but the chap wasn't in that day and I don't know if S went back.

ie Job: It seemed ok. In effect he dismissed himself. They have a joint action plan, the social work, the project, S and I talk about different things like finding a job. They write a report supposedly and we'll meet again in 6 months time. It's since then he's moved and the report hadn't been written up when he moved so they didn't have any information about S when he moved in there. There were too many people telling him to do a job and then the other one would come back and say "never mind what he says, do this", then the other one would come back and say "what are you doing that for you haven't finished this yet". We got him to realise that he should have talked to someone at the project about the problems rather than bottling it all up. He would say he was at his work and he wasn't, we didn't know he'd given it up straight away. The project tried to get him reinstated but employer wouldn't. If he can't cope, or he has a problem, instead he just walks away from the situation.

.....

the job was all right just too many bosses and he couldn't cope with it. Also he was telling them how to run the rehouse at one point, that they were ordering too much stuff. The problem with that job was that it wasn't every day. He'd not finished at the end of the day too many boxes piled up, you couldn't think I'll do that tomorrow. The volume of stuff was great.

NEWS ABOUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROJECT:

worked alongside him until he was confident. They felt they'd made a mistake with the other job, the pressure it put on him under. The project is quite good. It's difficult for them to get employers to take on people like S.

.....

had to phone the project to keep up to date. S never tells us anything, you have to interrogate him. Depends who he's with, sometimes he chats away but with us you have to drag it out of him. He comes up twice a week to see us. He goes to the gym with his dad to the north campus with his dad once a week. He was going to play snooker on Tuesdays but then the swimming started.

FTCOMES: Hopefully having a job would increase his skills. It definitely gives him a purpose in life something to work up for. Needed more days, needs something every day even just a half a day.

status of having a job, and I suppose that made him more confident, he seemed to feel better about himself. You've got to question him, got to prize it out of him. It makes a big difference to him when he's got a job having a purpose and being out and being busy I would say so.

ney - still has pocket money. Probably would be same cos he is on different benefits. He's on SDA, so soon as he gets a job he's on DWA and there's always this gap waiting for money between jobs, then he has to clear his debts. He would still just get same pocket money if he found another job because he pays for his accommodation.

e went to somebody's 21st party from work, so he did make friends through work. The organisation had a disco and he
ked a couple of the workers from work and they came. At that disco, that's a difference with S him and A were on the
oor, he was quite confident, he felt he was in charge. He was definitely more confident. His friend A goes to all sorts
'things but S will never go... That's why his dad takes him to the snooker and the gym but he needs to meet people his
vn age.

JTURE: I hope he's going to get a job of some kind. It's difficult to get through to S he doesn't listen to what you're
ying to him. He'll keep harking back to B&Q. That was only a YTS and they didn't keep him on after that finished.

.....

Excerpts from first interview with S's Jobcoach

5/05/95

ROJNAME: Project 1

1: S had a job initially at XXX. When he first came to us we thought he'd be fast track so we placed him in that job, worked with him for two to three weeks supported employment training. The job fell through after four months, basically it wasn't a good job match. S didn't particularly like working with money. Now we've taken more into consideration what he wants to do. S was first referred in 1994. The vocational profile was completed in 2-3 weeks and we got him a job almost immediately. He had had placements on YT and had been to college. The job terminated in Feb 1995. Since then we restarted the vocational profile in March trying to identify any areas we'd missed and looking how we had job matched him incorrectly. Started job search with him going to the Job Centre, filling in application forms, looking in the newspaper, contacting employers on his behalf. P met him regularly and helped him complete application forms. We've a better picture of S. He did a retail course 1992-1994 and has an appreciation of what's involved in retail and warehousing. His YT placements were in stores, Texas and B&Q.

2: See above.

3: Yes.

4: Initially about 3 weeks, then the second time another 3-4 weeks. I'd say about two months overall.

5: No.

6: He's on SDA so he must have been assessed by a GP. He appears to have mild learning disability, but can appear a lot more able than he is. He attended ordinary primary school and then between the ages of 12-16 he went to a special school. From there he attended a special needs extension course. He was on the special needs YT scheme.

7: Need to get to know S. He's not shy but not that chatty. Basically he's wanting to move out into independent living. He's a pretty laid back bloke.

8: Good financial skills can manage his own money. Travels by bus, has a special bus pass. Fills in his own forms but his writing is bad so we help him do that. Able to look after himself.

9: Discussed different jobs with him in completing the vocational profile, visiting him at college, at home and central area locations. Seems a very sociable chap.

10: We knew he was looking for a warehouse assistant job from the start. Difficulty was that employers look for all sorts of skills so they can put them on other duties when there are quiet periods. We had to be quite clear with the employer it was only for a specific job, no way could he take over the till, handling cash as this was what went wrong on his first job. The tasks had to be clearly spelled out, collecting the pallets and handling the deliveries.

11: He wanted this type of work. He has experience in this work. He's also a big lad so he can cope physically with this kind of work. I felt he was a good worker. It's been more about matching his skills than the specific environment.

12a: Yes definitely. We were going along to the job centre he could have got another job in a lighting manufacturer. After going along to visit he blatantly told us he didn't want it.

12b: Yes. See other answers also.

13: Definitely.

14: Initial contact with our organisation, his father has been on the phone a few times. His father has assisted in making sure S gets to interviews etc. He's supportive of S getting a job. His mum is supportive also.

15: Gain more independence, more confidence, grow in maturity. Also social interaction. Earning money may bring him more confidence as the opportunities to do more social things becomes available to him. I know he wants to do more but he's held back by benefits, lack of money.

16: SDA approx. £56 DWA only runs out in May from the previous job when he can reclaim Income Support, but he starts his job next week.

17: Yes. Will earn around £58 and with a top up from DWA his take home pay will be £98 per week.

18: S will receive full time support for as long as he requires it. Have been doing job analysis over two to three days, talking the job and will be working with S. Support for at least a month might be longer. Regular visits to employment site and meeting with his supervisor will be set up. This wasn't happening with the previous job.

19: No.

20: S has changed jobs. The project revisits the vocational profile and ensures an adequate job match.

21: Lives at home with parents and sister. He has a friend who lives in supported accommodation and S has applied for supported accommodation himself. Doesn't have a huge circle of friends. He stays in quite a lot. He used to do voluntary work at the hospital WRVS canteen.

22: Goes to a swimming club every week. Likes computer games. Plays snooker. Likes to hire videos and going to the cinema.

23: Currently some social work dept involvement to help him move into independent living.

COMMENT: This is what he's been working towards, has been to college, placements, it will be good for his self-esteem, self-confidence. Good for him to start believing in himself.

Excerpts from second interview with S's Jobcoach

S's job lasted just over four months. He worked 16 hours a week for £3.26 an hour as a warehouse assistant.

Job support for at least two and half months every day and then faded support. I thought he had learned the job but he hadn't. Lot of job training needed for this job. The difficulty was that it wasn't very structured and they were putting a lot of ad hoc demands on him. There were too many chiefs and not enough Indians, it was run like that and he was getting conflicting orders. I went in and learnt the job myself and met the staff. He got some of the numbers mixed up but he was ok if he wore his glasses. They were reorganising the warehouse and that was a big part of our job. K his supervisor was the only other work colleague. They used to occasionally get part timers at the weekend. Then there was a complete change, one of the supervisors went for managers job and he was then in the warehouse all the time making demands on S and the other guy. He was a bit bolshy. S got frustrated because he wanted to go on the shop floor but his hygiene was complained about. This happened when he moved into his flat. Other staff complained. I phoned his residential keyworker. He used to go onto the shop floor to ask if they wanted him to get stock out and he would get side tracked.

When someone loses a job we always look at the employment worker - maybe I should have gone back in when it got difficult. He does appear to be 'aye I can do this' but he does need more structure.

Job match - ideally it was what he was looking for but he wanted to be on the shop floor like in B&Q. He was really really so the hygiene issue was a problem. They were really good there was no excuse he could go in and use odorant. S never said anything wrong, he said everything was fine, no problems.

He lost the job, he never turned up for 3 days or phoned in - that's a sackable offence. I think it was his way of saying I don't like this job.

He didn't need help with social interaction. He fitted in with the gossiping and swearing that was part of the work culture. He was quite independent in terms of breaks and mixing, it was more about learning the job. The warehouse was such a state. They weren't the best employers. They go through a lot of staff. They don't offer holidays until you've been there a while. Not good work benefits but it was part time and got him full DWA. The work was like fighting a losing battle, just seemed never to get anywhere, problem that affected people's motivation. It was a small working environment confined space. There was no job description and they weren't very sure what the job was. I've learnt if a job is not structured and it fails it looks like they were incompetent when they were asked to do things. Not ideal but the world isn't ideal and there's a lot of unemployed people out there. We try and place people in good jobs.

S realises that in future he has to take more responsibility. He had a lot of input from me, social worker and his residential keyworker. He needs to communicate his difficulties in future and that has been explained to him if we are going to work with him. Maybe we could have been more diligent re employer contact once I'd faded the support.

Because he had just moved into supported accommodation we were not sure about roles. I informed his keyworker and he said she was dealing with the personal hygiene problem. It turned out no one was doing it. If it was to do with the job then we should have gotten involved. Work and home are separate issues. He's still not very realistic about his capabilities. He can only earn £15 a week because he's in supported accommodation and paying over £200 per week. He's looking at forecourt attendant - tills and that was why his first job fell through. We had meetings with S and came down hard on him. He could have said he didn't like it sooner. He let a lot of people down. He didn't communicate. Made me angry putting in a lot of unsociable hours for nothing. He just let it go. He has to use the supports properly. At that point his finances were in such a mess.

I'm going to start a new vocational profile with him. I would be looking at getting a Saturday job in one of these areas like retail. I'll meet with his social worker and keyworker and we'll try and make a plan about how to work in the future.

Employer: The company was a big company. 60-70 employees mainly on the shop floor. Good social opportunities, smokers room, very gossipy. S got a chance to build displays on the shop floor. He wanted to do it his way not the way was being shown. Educating S that each work culture is different was one of the problems in that place. It had a very particular culture and S kept harking back to B&Q. He had his own vision of how things should be. He didn't like taking orders from his supervisor. He destroyed the job himself.

Job loss: It was in the area - retail - that he wanted to work. I think looking back we took the job because there wasn't a lot in the area. We knew there wasn't a lot of structure to the job. I thought that's where I would help. It was a bad job-match in terms of not being structured enough for S. You cannot always anticipate these things, you just hope with your help it will work out.

Outcomes: S got a sense of normality from working, relationships. It wasn't the best work culture in the world but he was treated like any other employee. He got independence, money was very important. He talked about money a lot. He built up relationships with the managers on his own. He was socially integrated into the workplace. He gained work experience, this job had such variety I don't think it did him any harm. It gave him an insight into other workplaces.

Don't know if it improved his self-esteem really, it was a very difficult time when he was moving into his flat. He didn't get job satisfaction in the end because he started to get pissed off with it.

Basically, you went into the warehouse and you stayed there, there were no facilities around there, that was demoralising. I used to have to get out to get air. It didn't seem to bother S. He probably fitted into the workplace really well. Question whether it's a good idea to put people into jobs when they're moving house. That was a big thing for him. Difficult to make all the adjustments re the job and living independent. When I see him he's very positive. He was even a hard time off a lot of people when this happened.

Has to realise he has special needs. He wants to lead an independent life, sometimes he finds it difficult to accept help. 'I'm fine I want to do this myself' - if he accepted help it could be successful.